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ROCK AUSTRALIA MAGAZINE

RAM

DYLAN/PETTY

ALONE, TOGETHER & SEPARATE

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS

PIC: ROSS BARNETT

PETE TOWNSHEND Inside White City • DEE C. LEE • JOHN LYDON/PIL • FINE YOUNG CANNIBALS • FAIRPORT CONVENTION •

THE STEMS • ZIMMERMEN • CRAVEN FOPS• DEADLY HUME • BRING PHILIP • MARGINAL ERA •

LIVE — Dylan/Petty, Dire Straits, Nico, Lloyd Cole

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RAM LETTERS

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO:
3RD FLOOR, 52 FRANCIS ST., DARLINGHURST, NSW., 2010

A PAEAN IN THE APSE

'A Pop song is like a book, you open it up and your imagination weaves the images as your eyes read the words — it can mean anything to you.' — S. Kilbey, RAM # 277.

Surely this is how it should be. Why then must our imaginations be guided (unwillingly) so that we know exactly what the song means? Some songs can mean anything to you.

I have just listened to Heyday for the first time and I feel vaguely 'disenchanted'. I'd read interviews and reviews and so the mood and scene for the whole album had been set and my head was filled with preconceptions and conclusions (other people's) as to what it was all about. Kilbey's lyrics are characteristically obscure to a greater or lesser degree on each EP or album, so too on Heyday his "other worldly" images and language and structure of what are otherwise simple words create that elusiveness of meaning that is sometimes frustrating yet always intriguing. So why is it suddenly necessary for interviewers to get Kilbey to explain the concept and meaning behind each track? Do they think the public is so lazy or simple that it needs to be spoon fed in such a way or so cynical that they think if we know 'what the guy is going on about this time' we'll be more accepting? This aspect of the interview with Kilbey was so irritating. Why should he be asked to articulate in a sentence, ideas which may, as he says, be incapable of articulation in everyday speech hence the need to express them in poetry or song?

Kilbey's lyrics are capable of a myriad of interpretations and numerous shades and depths of meaning and intensity, and their beauty often lies in the fact that they can mean absolutely anything to you, just as they may mean absolutely nothing to some. But really there it is — you listen for yourself and discover for yourself your own meaning, it may not be the author's meaning, but it doesn't make it any less valid. Is there really a right interpretation in any sort of art? Sure, Money For Nothing by Dire Straits is obviously a song about a worker's perception of a rock musician's life style. This is obvious, but what One Day, Is This WhereYou Live?, An Interlude (and the list goes on), mean to me and what they mean to someone else are probably worlds apart. Given this, it is really annoying to be told that this song is about success and fame and this is about an emperor etc. — because it is and yet it isn't. Nothing about Steve Kilbey's lyrics is that straightforward or simple. Surely even now Steve may read into his songs meanings and themes that he didn't initially perceive.

And surely he didn't make a conscious effort to make a 'concept' album as you would have us believe. Because the music is so atmospheric and the words so open to interpretation its meaning depends on your mood as well.

I always believed that Kilbey's lyrics had to be listened to to be enjoyed and, if listened to by a listener with a creative and active imagination, they can be incredibly moving and full of meaning, even if, in reality, they are 'deep without a meaning'. Who cares — it can mean anything to you. If the music and words appeal to your emotions, does it matter whether or not they make logical sense and is knowing their real meaning that important?

If there is a meaning in this letter it is this — that in concentrating on knowing the correct meaning we ignore all the possibilities that may be, and to do that is not to do justice to Kilbey's talent as a writer.

Mary Agresta,
Ascot Vale, NSW.

Whew! They're a devoted congregation, these Church-goers. It's enough to make RAM think twice before writing about Kilbey — it's almost a case of damned if you don't, damned if you do. Incidentally, this epistle is just one example of the deluge of scripture we've received on recent Church stories... Blessings also to Carol, East Brisbane; Mac, Deer Park, Vic.; and a Church Believer, Newcastle. May the paisley be with you.

JUST A MINUTE, MAN

Just a "fucking corndog from (San) Pedro" he may well have been, but D. Boon would have been too uncool to describe himself as a brilliant artist and composer.

It's a bloody shame that the Minutemen were finally mentioned by the media (Transit Lounge, RAM # 277), not for their uniqueness and no-copout ideology, but rather because of the death of their guitarist.

Will other bands on the SST Label also be indefinitely ignored by the Australian rock press — bands such as Saint Vitus, Saccharine Trust, Black Flag, Meat Puppets, Wurm, DC3 and Husker Du — or will the death of one of their members be worthy of only a 50-word inscription? Bands such as these are too infrequent to ignore.
PS: At least RAM mentioned the death which is more than I can say about other magazines.

A.J. Amis
South of Sydney
by a few hundred miles

So who described Boon as a "brilliant artist and composer"? To set the record straight, RAM has reviewed the Puppets and Husker Du, and all these bands have received coverage from time to time in our LA Despatch by Cary Darling, who is ideally placed to comment on California thrash — none of which has seen local release, which makes it a difficult subject to cover. But look for future articles on the Du and Wire Train, who will soon enjoy Australian release, and, no doubt, the stardom they so richly deserve. Then we'll all have to find another cult.

OH, YEAH?

In regard to your most recent badmouthing of Metal Mercenaries (Singles, issue #277), I would like to point out to Mr Mac Robertson that the single was inspired by, and not stolen from, Not The 9 O'Clock News, as was clearly stated in the letter accompanying your complimentary copy of the single.
PS: Next time "you're going to take the piss" — make sure you have some!

Andii,
Managing Director,
Oh Yeah Productions,
East Sydney, NSW.

Thanks, Andii. But while we're coining phrases, how about "any publicity's good publicity"? A single should stand on its own merits without a PR gloss. And next time you mention "inspiration", make sure the band has some!

TRUE TO LIFE

Over the past few years Australian bands are establishing themselves in our country and earning recognition around the world. It is due to very hard work, but despite their successes it is apparent by your articles that you are trying to destroy an excellent band, Real Life. If people have not seen the band they do not know what they will be like, and after reading your articles on the band they would be put off seeing them.

They are an Australian band and it's us Australians who should be praising them and giving them the encouragement that they need instead of running them down. It's hard enough trying to make it without a lot of criticism from the press. I am 24 years of age and have seen a lot of bands, both good and bad. To my disappointment the bands that were getting a lot of media coverage did not live up to their expectations, their recorded music sounded nothing like their stage performance.

Real Life is a band that sounds even better on stage than they do on their records. It was quite by chance that I managed to go to their gig, as I was not a fan of theirs, but unlike other bands they had my undivided attention from the moment they got on the stage. They are a very vibrant band and seem to project enthusiasm throughout their entire audience, unlike other well-known bands.

The rest of the world loved them and gave them the praise that they really deserve, I believe that if your magazine has nothing good to say about the band please don't print anything at all. Enthusiasm in people is hard to build up so why kill the enthusiasm that these people have?

After seeing the band once I have not stopped going to see them and they have not yet disappointed me with their performances but seem to be getting better all the time. If the press would cease their criticism it would give them the opportunity to develop into one of Australia's premier bands, so that we Australians could be very proud of them.

A.H.,
Real Life Fan,
Melbourne, Vic.

If you're referring to the interview in issue # 277, we'd respectfully suggest you read it again. It seems to us that Richard Zatorski, who is quoted verbatim and at length, gives at least as good as he gets.

A DEARTH OF PERTH?

Congratulations on your efforts in producing Australia's most informative and interesting rock music magazine. Your balance of interviews, reviews and other rock-related articles is superb and must surely make your competitors envious.

I read with great interest the recent story on Perth's original music scene (Outer Limits, issue # 277). While it was satisfying to see that Perth is finally getting some of the recognition it deserves, I cannot help thinking that the article itself was a somewhat shallow interpretation of the Perth scene.

Your correspondent made little attempt to divulge any information other than an endless (almost) stream of names of bands past and present, which I am sure could hold little interest for readers in other states. I am a local and I could hardly make head or tail out of it. For a start I fail to see what relevance the large photo of Surprise Surprise had for the article or the Perth scene. They are now defunct, and even when they were playing never attracted even a half-decent following. It wouldn't 'surprise' me if they were just mates of your reporter.

The biggest omission by your reporter was the less-than-cursory mention of United Rock. United Rock was and still is the most important new institution in the West Australian rock scene. United Rock is a co-operative formed by a group of local musos with the aim of stimulating young original bands through live performances (difficult for original bands to secure over here in cover-band city) and also through recording. So far there have been three United Rock cassettes released, with another one in the pipeline now. The most notable contributors to United Rock so far being the Bamboos, Mutants Of Desire, Femme Fatale, Helicopters and Wayne Green (ex-Boys).

While there were other omissions in the article (notably anything about top band Strange Daze or the Amazing Kooka Brothers, who are now called Creatures Of Habit), I won't harp on it as I do not wish to denigrate the article as such. It was such a joy just to read anything about the Perth scene.

Brian Dunne,
Boulder, W.A.

We do our best (they said humbly). Thanks for the constructive criticism as well as the praise, and send more contributions (preferably a mite less subjective than the review you enclosed). It's good to see at least one out-of-towner is doing something to correct the Sydney bias of RAM. As it says in the fine print on page 27, contributions are welcome — from every state, and not just once a year... And see next issue for a report on the Perth Rock Awards!

IF YOU KNEW SUZIE

This is an open letter to Suzanne Dowling (I'm sure someone of her taste and intelligence reads RAM).

SUZANNE DOWLING, I LOVE YOU! How rare to find a woman who is intelligent and friendly and incredibly beautiful. I'm sure Lou Reed wrote that song I Love You Suzanne about you. You're such a perfect television host — not slick, self-conscious and self-obsessed like typical TV hosts, but warm, human and genuinely likeable. You should be winning Logies for your work with Rock Arena.

Every Tuesday and Saturday nights I am glued to the set. I even videotape your introductions. I have a whole video cassette of them going back to1984. I've got tapes of you with long hair, short hair, long on one side, short on the other like Phil Oakey used to have, I've got the time you dyed your hair silver (yecch!) and the 659 sets of earrings — all recorded for posterity.

So keep going what you're doing — you do it sobrilliantly. Keep coming up with crazy new hairdos and earrings and you will keep television colourful and worth watching... single-handedly.

The President of the SDAAAS
(Suzanne Dowling Appreciation, Admiration & Adoration Society),
Brisbane, Qld.

Don't look now, Suzanne — this is your life.

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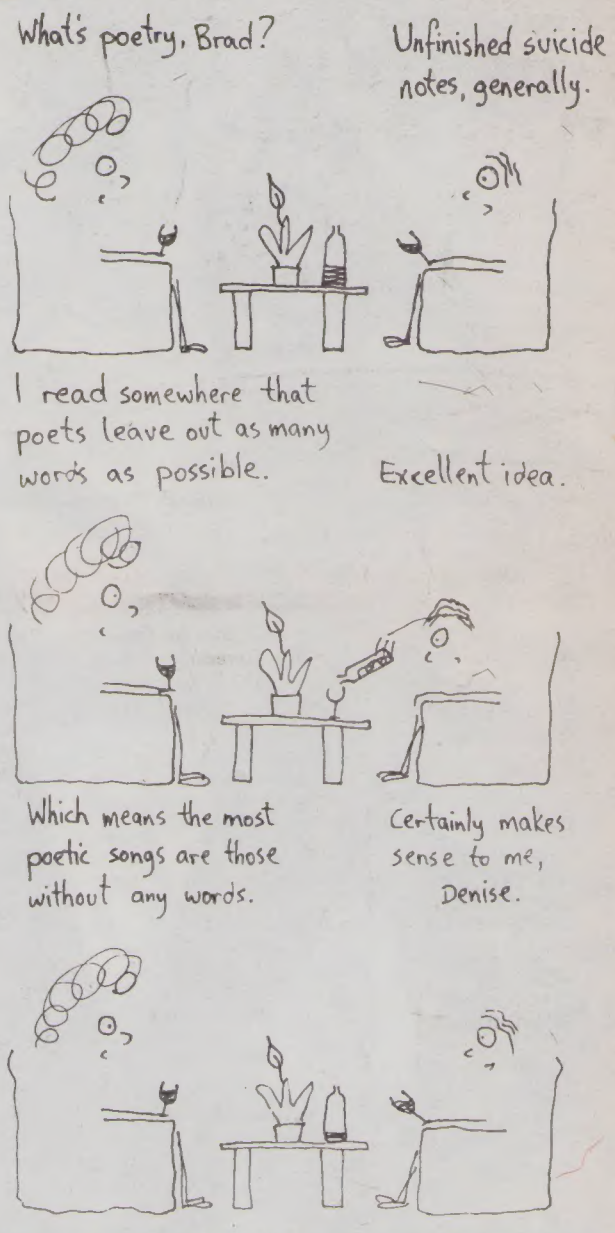

What's poetry, Brad?
Unfinished suicide notes, generally.
I read somewhere that poets leave out as many words as possible.
Excellent idea.
Which means the most poetic songs are those without any words.
Certainly makes sense to me, Denise.
'DEEP WITHOUT A MEANING': Art & Concept by GREG SMITH

TRANSIT LOUNGE

PEOPLE • EVENTS • THINGS ON THE MOVE

HANGIN' OUT WITH THE HEAVIES

Ex Madonna mainboy and producer/DJ-about-New York Jellybean Benitez (L) made it backstage at last December's triumphant taking of the NY Ritz by Divinyls, only to be forced to cheer up by a typically sarky Chrissie Amphlett. Disciplinarian Robert Palmer (now Power Station-less) looks on disapprovingly to her right, whilst D's Mark McEntee and drummer J.J. Harris wonder what's in the can. Divinyls are currently in the UK, where Chrissie's vocals have been likened to anyone from Pat Benatar to Fleetwood Mac by a typically disparaging English press. Water off a duck's back, if the ferocity of their recent European live shows is anything to go by... Ask Jellybean, who seems to have enjoyed the Ritz show — he had little choice in the matter. And God help the next critic who makes another pallid comparison...

RECORD COMPANIES IN TURMOIL — Three Ships Lose Rudders

Late February saw personnel shakeups in the boardrooms of three local record companies: both the Virgin and Big Time labels suffered leadership challenges, whilst the Australian managing directorship at EMI changed hands for the third time in a year.

Although the situation at EMI is described as "well in hand", 18 staff members were dismissed pending the arrival of new M.D., David Schnell (formerly of EMI New Zealand). Outgoing M.D. Rupert Perry, who was installed temporarily late last year, is reportedly returning to home base in the UK. It's believed that certain local artists signed to EMI will depart the label in his wake.

Meanwhile, at Big Time Records (home of the Hoodoo Gurus, Huxton Creepers and Painters & Dockers, among others), general manager Brooke Massey has resigned following a "clash of ideals" with the label's American-based founder, Fred Bestall. And at Virgin, confusion rules as M.D. Moira Bennett flies to the UK to confer with company supremo Richard Branson following a heavily rumoured local leadership challenge late last month. The confrontation was such that the entire staff of Virgin Australia resigned in sympathy at one stage, though it was "business as usual" as we went to press.

The unrelated irony of the whole story is that both Virgin and Big Time product is distributed in this country by EMI...

PHIL STAFFORD

Having signed to Chris Murphy's MMA management group (which also houses INXS and Models) for Australian representation, Mick Jones' **Big Audio Dynamite** are currently considering offers to tour later this year. Watch for an upcoming feature...

Sisterly love? Former members of the **Sisters Of Mercy** are tearing at each other's wimples. Guitarist and bassist **Wayne Hussey** and **Craig Adams** have a new band called the **Sisterhood** — and so does vocalist **Andrew Eldritch,** who already has a single, *Giving Ground* (on Merciful Release records), at No. 1 on *Melody Maker*'s indie chart. Mercy! Looks like Sister Mary Andrew has stolen a march on his former sisters of the cloth. More nun-chucking news in next week's *Catholic Weekly*.

More silly cover versions: quarter-page ads in the British trade papers announce another version of the 60s classic *Eloise*, which regular readers of this page will remember is also the projected new single for the **Damned** (who are probably wishing they'd kept their big traps shut). This latest interpretation is by **Robin McAuley,** who, as we all know, is one of the members of **Far Corporation** who've already scored big with their grandiose and unintentionally humorous rendition of another classic (oh, blasphemy!) — that hoary old Zep relic, *Stairway To Heaven*. Back to the ad, which trumpets: "Don't Be A Damned Fool (geddit?), Get The Definitive Version!" Yeah, but which one?

A new series on rock music — ***Pop Movie*** — has been pre-sold to ABC-TV, and should be screened in late April or early May in the weekday 6pm timeslot. Designed to "de-glamorise the music industry" and present the everyday realities of a career in rock/pop, the six-episode series is produced by Melbourne co-op **Musical Films** (Christina Pozzan, Ray Argall and Daniel Schaff) among whose credits are videos for Models, Jo Jo Zep, the Oils and Enz. Individual shows will examine the myth of stardom, the structure and function of radio, and the realities of forming a band and keeping it on the road...

Should dovetail nicely with yet another new ABC music/youth issues show, scheduled to go to air in late March. Called ***Edge Of The Wedge,*** it'll spotlight the alternative scene and incorporate live footage along with clips denied the usual mainstream exposure, and will be hosted by 2JJJ-FM's **Mark Dodshon.** To be aired three times weekly (Monday through Wednesdays at 6pm), *The Wedge* hopes to extend to Thursdays by the end of May; only last week, a production crew shot and recorded performance footage of **Ed Kuepper** and **Paul Kelly** for future inclusion. Watch for its debut on March 31, and aspiring local artists please note: the producers are eager to lay their eyes on your videos, whatever the budget strictures. Call Craig Collie or Linda Booth for further info on (02) 437 9988 or (02) 437 9016; alternatively, send your meisterwerks to: *Edge Of The Wedge*, GPO Box 9994, Sydney 2001....

Matt Moffitt has finally settled on a director for the clip to accompany his upcoming debut solo single, *Miss This Tonight* (already about four months late in itself). Looking after the visuals will be **Bert Deling** (best known for his fetures *Dalmas, Pure S* and *Dead Esy*). Meanwhile, Moffitt has re-entered the studio to rework a few tracks off the album, and may even replace a couple... Expect it out about 1990.

Though never exactly prolific in the video medium, **Midnight Oil** are about to release two new live clips, both shot in Canada — one for *Hercules*, one for *Progress:* tracks from the still-megaselling *Species Deceases* EP... and there's already a third clip on the boards, a video montage for *Pictures* from the same EP. Overseeing the visuals, to feature footage from the threatened Daintree rainforest area in far north Queensland, is **John Whitteron** (of early Men At Work fame). Release of the three clips will be staggered "to avoid confusion" (overkill?), according to CBS...

Despite the recent departure of long-standing guitarist **John Brewster,** the **Angels** have forged ahead with recording plans. They're currently in Sydney's Rhinoceros Studios preparing new material with producer **Steve Brown,** who's previously worked with the likes of Wham!, ABC, U2 and the Cult. Three tracks have already been completed, from which will come the new single; recording of the next LP gets under way in May, with release slated for July/August. The band already has 18 new songs to choose from, and has yet to announce a replacement for Brewster. Auditions are still proceeding...

Moves are under way for **Do. Re. Mi** to mount a three-month promotional tour of Europe later this year, with critical interest building on album sales in the region of 15-20,000. Already charting on alternative radio listings in Holland, the band intends to base itself in Amsterdam and ply TV, radio and press outlets across the continent. Before departing however, the Do's are to headline a special show to be staged on the steps of Parliament House on March 9, as part of the annual Festival of Canberra. Band management stresses there are "no political overtones", and that if Hawke wants to get in on the act, "he'll have to strap on a guitar". Let's hope the stage roadies keep any stray amplifiers well out of his reach...

Coming back to earth, and r'n'b wildebeesties the **Hippos** are to release a "six- or seven-track mini album" called *Mammals On The Move* before doing just that... Moving to Perth that is, where the mudholes are just that little bit moister with Yachtees' Gold Rush fever in full economic swing.

In exchange for the Hippos, Perth (or more accurately, Fremantle) gives us the **Jam Tarts & the Nansing Quartet,** a ten-piece multi-talented ensemble currently assaulting the East Coast. Actually a combination of two separate groups, this raving roadshow is about as eclectic as you can get — the Jam Tarts double as four all-singing, all-dancing and playing teenage girls, two of whom are sisters. Not only are they multi-instrumentalists to a person, but the Tarts can sing anything from bossa nova to Motown. As for the Nansing 'Quartet', it's in reality a six-piece aggregation of the hottest pickers, pluckers and beaters ever to run riot through the virtual history of music: they play western swing, country, r'n'b, soul and probably anything else you can think of. Catch 'em (separately & together) around during most of March...

Fresh from a weight-shedding clinic are Sydney's **Private** (formerly Private Lives), who released an album to a very private audience last year and went out to promote it with a nine-piece onstage private army... Now stripped back to a wieldy five-piece, Privates Jon Needham and Phil Munro are joined by drummer Stuart Cook (ex Tenement Dance), keyboardist Greg Bartlett and Kerry Lambe on guitar/keys (both ex Modern Contours, an NZ band). We can't tell you any more —it's Private...

Anyone suffering a Tamworth hangover (or who'd like a hair of the bull in any case) can take the country cure at Sydney's extremely rustic North Bondi RSL when **2JJJ-FM** presents its **'Hoedown Git-Down'** this Friday, February 28. With an overwhelming response to the station's recent *Hats On For Tamworth* special the primary impetus, the evening's hijinx will feature award-winning pickers the **Flying Emus** live-to-air, along with **Paul Kelly & the Coloured Girls, Wild Wild Women** and the **Texan Floozies**. Square-dance to the directions of a real-live Hog Caller, rehearse that yodel (prizes for the best tonsil-vibrator) and by all means break out the chaps. And you can leave your hat on, 'cos it's a dollar cheaper if you wear one ($7 for the bareheads). Git along li'l dogie...

"The greatest band in the world" — if you believe the *NME* — plays Sydney this week on the second leg of a semi-national tour; it's the **Go-Betweens**, and why not believe it? Seems the local 'industry' pundits are at least half-convinced, with 2MMM in Sydney daring to programme their new single *(Spring Rain)* and *Countdown* actually considering an option on the clip.

BENEATH THE BOTTOM LINE
Going (Further) Public

Well, well, well. So Michael Edgley's going public, eh? A lot of people think he went public a long time ago and that he should have kept it to himself, but I'm talking of course about his much bally-hooed share issue.

Now, going public is something I considered doing years ago, and rejected. It's a lot harder to work behind the scenes, move your money around, and generally be sneaky when you have to issue an annual report. Imagine having shareholders on the phone, demanding explanations, making suggestions — I mean, if you've got total control, you've got total control!

On the other hand, you mightn't have as much money as you'd like. So you go public.

This got me to thinking. As I wandered into the stock exchange to buy my one Edgley share (so I could walk into the annual general meeting and make a complete nuisance of myself), it occurred to me that a small board could be set up on the trading floor dealing in nothing but entertainment stock. What a lark that'd be! Promoters, agents, venues, even bands could buy and sell interests in each other to the point where no-one knew who owned what or why. Picture the scene! It'd be just like a *real* industry.

Of course, the punters would need investment advice, and Grubblecorp would happily oblige — for a small fee. If your portfolio included 4,000 shares in the Tivoli, for example, you might want to sell off your Uncanny X-Men options and put all your money into Trade Union Club futures in case the whole scam moves downmarket. Besides, what will the X-Men be worth in 50 years? Less than nothing, in my view.

If I were giving advice now, I'd have to say that investors should have a close look at subtle movements in the price of Mental As Anything stock. Rumours of moves to break up the "Big Australian" are sending ripples through the market, and until it's clear whether or not Martin Plaza is to be a wholly-owned subsidiary, let the buyer beware. If the group were to be split into its component parts, it's hard to say whether a Plaza issue would have the same long-term potential as Mombassa heavy industrial.

The Church is an organization that the investor should pay close attention to, but I wouldn't advise buying until the Securities Exchange crowd have finished their investigations. That could take some time.

The Dynamic Hepnotics, while not exactly blue ribbon stuff, are a sound long-term investment. Over the years, this solid rhythm and blues manufacturer has shown that you don't need a flashy corporate image to maintain consumer confidence. They are a far better bet than some of the high-risk venue futures on offer; remember how badly burned some speculators were over Dance Club futures a couple of years back?

Next issue we might have a look at some of the fallout of the Angels' last board meeting. On the other hand, we might not. I'm J. Wallace Grubblesnutch.

J. WALLACE GRUBBLESNUTCH

HAUTE COUTURE

If you've never heard of Charlelie Couture, it's not your fault. I hadn't either until Louis Thevenin of SBS Radio shoved four albums into my solar plexus and said: "This guy's in Australia in March. If that rock magazine you write for doesn't talk about it, what good is it?"

Charlelie Couture is French, and French records aren't released in Australia. The problem isn't just that the lyrics are incomprehensible (though that doesn't help any), but that French is too pretty to Anglo-Saxon ears to sound credible in a rock genre. Or so the theory goes.

Couture gets around this nicely by singing, as one critic put it, "from his stomach", in a menacing, on-mic post-Tom Waits style over a very tidy band. He threads the softer French stresses through rolling sustained funk licks so that they sound like they should be there.

The guy is big news in France. He's one of the only French musicians to make good without moving to the big smoke. As he explains in words that should be on the lips of small-town rockers everywhere, "You don't have to go to Paris to prove your worth". Working from his home in Nancy, he's sold over a million records and has four albums out on Island, their third signing after Bob Marley and Steve Winwood. None of them are available here.

European music, whether good or bad, gets zilch exposure in this country unless it's music designed for the international market. When it is, it's in English, contrived, and mostly very dull. (Remember ABBA?) It also bears little resemblance to the homegrown product, which naturally varies from fabulous to bloody awful.

Couture is playing at the Adelaide Festival, and then moves to Melbourne (two free Moomba shows, 6th & 7th of March at the Alexandra Gardens) and Sydney (March 10 at the Teachers' Federation Auditorium). He is, I'm told, bringing his band with him, in which case he's well worth checking out.

PAT SHEIL

(le pic par DENIS MOUSTY)

If it's strange names that impress the powers that be, then England has a mortgage on 'em right now. Seems the only way to rouse that laconic UK breed of music hacks is either to be plain and Australian (major label acts excluded) or be plain weird. Check these English gig-list beacons for evidence: **Half Man Half Biscuit,** the **Housemartins, See You In Vegas, Goats Don't Shave, Tools You Can Trust, Sic Boy Federation, Eek A Mouse, I Fuck A Nun** and... wait for it... **'We've Got A Fuzzbox And We're Gonna Use It'.** And to think the best RAM's crack Rockmanship team could come up with in years of brain-baking research was **'Frank — Don't Go In There — It's Horrible — You'll Be Killed'.** Of course, there was the late 70s Brisbane outfit that rejoiced in the even sillier appellation of **'Mother, There's Something In The Attic And It Flaps'**...

Local fans will be the last to see the proposed feature-length video of the just-completed **Dylan/Petty** tour, shot by Australian director **Gillian Armstrong**. This because Dylan's management have pre-sold the film idea to American television interests, although there are no plans for a general theatre release. "A cut version of the concert will be screened in the States, and eventually I hope on Australian television — but not for a long time," producer Greg Ricketson told *Encore* magazine. Because Dylan and Petty toured together as a one-off double act exclusive to Australia and New Zealand, management feels American audiences should have first bite at the film. Makes sound economic sense as well, no doubt...

'Hey big spender/spend a little time with me...' About two songs' worth, as a matter of fact. **Shirley Bassey** left the Sydney Ent. Cent. stage the other night almost as soon as she arrived, complaining of a "frog in the throat". A capacity house (at $27 a seat) gave her a standing ovation... Another short season, this time at Ronnie Scott's in London: **Nina Simone** lasted three songs, walking off when "somebody in the audience upset her". Further erratic appearances, culminating in a total non-show, resulted in the cancellation of her contract for "unprofessional behaviour"...

Folk fans need not be left out in the cold either, especially if they live in Melbourne — the site of this year's **20th Folk Festival**, to be held over Easter at La Trobe Uni... With appetites duly whetted by the likes of the McGarrigles, Tom Paxton, Fairport Convention and the Dubliners (all of whom have toured lately), an expected 10,000 folk freaks will converge on campus over the extra long weekend for workshops, concerts, dances and general revelry. Over 200 local performers (from **Eric Bogle** and **Judy Small** to 'New Weavers' **Weddings, Parties, Anything**) will share stages with trad. Anglo-Celtic acts as well as several from the Americas, Asia, Africa and the Middle East...

With the booty all but snatched on his back catalogue, the memory of **Bob Marley** goes on official sale come May 11 this year — the fifth anniversary of his death from brain cancer. Opportunism knocks, and someone's set up a 'Marley Museum' on the site of his former home in Kingston, Jamaica: it'll house an audio-visual room (to screen videos and rare Wailers' footage), four listening booths, an 'international memorabilia room', an archive/library, exhibition centre and 'merchandising counter' — where among other official Marley trinkets, you too can buy an 18-inch miniature of Jamaica's 'official Bob Marley statue'... next they'll be selling his old roaches. Natty dread indeed...

The Indonesian government has ordered the withdrawal of **Live Aid** bootlegs in that country following representations to their ambassador in England by **Bob Geldof**...

IRA gunmen held **Feargal Sharkey**'s mother and sister hostage for some hours in Londonderry last week. Mrs Sybil Sharkey and Mrs Ursula Clifford were visiting friends when the gunmen took over the house as part of a plan to ambush security forces. No-one was injured in the incident, which police say had nothing to do with the Sharkey family.

Having just completed clips for INXS *(Kiss The Dirt)* and the Venetians *(Inspiration)*, Sydney-based 'visual artists' **Meaningful Eye Contact** are about to embark on their first short feature. Described as "a black comedy set amidst the debris of a crumbling world", the five-week project has a working title of *Spirits Of The Air — Gremlins Of The Clouds*, and will take a substantial crew into remote central Australian desert locations for the duration of the shoot.

England's most famous unrecorded band, **Sigue Sigue Sputnik**, are about to blow their credibility sky-high by — you guessed it — releasing a single. Sorry, a *hit* record. A cleverly stunt-studded and protracted publicity campaign has had the UK press and public literally salivating for months, and even this column must admit a mild curiosity as we await the **Giorgio Moroder**-produced *Love Missile F1-11* b/w the self-produced *Hack Attack*.

A WILLIAM FRIEDKIN FILM

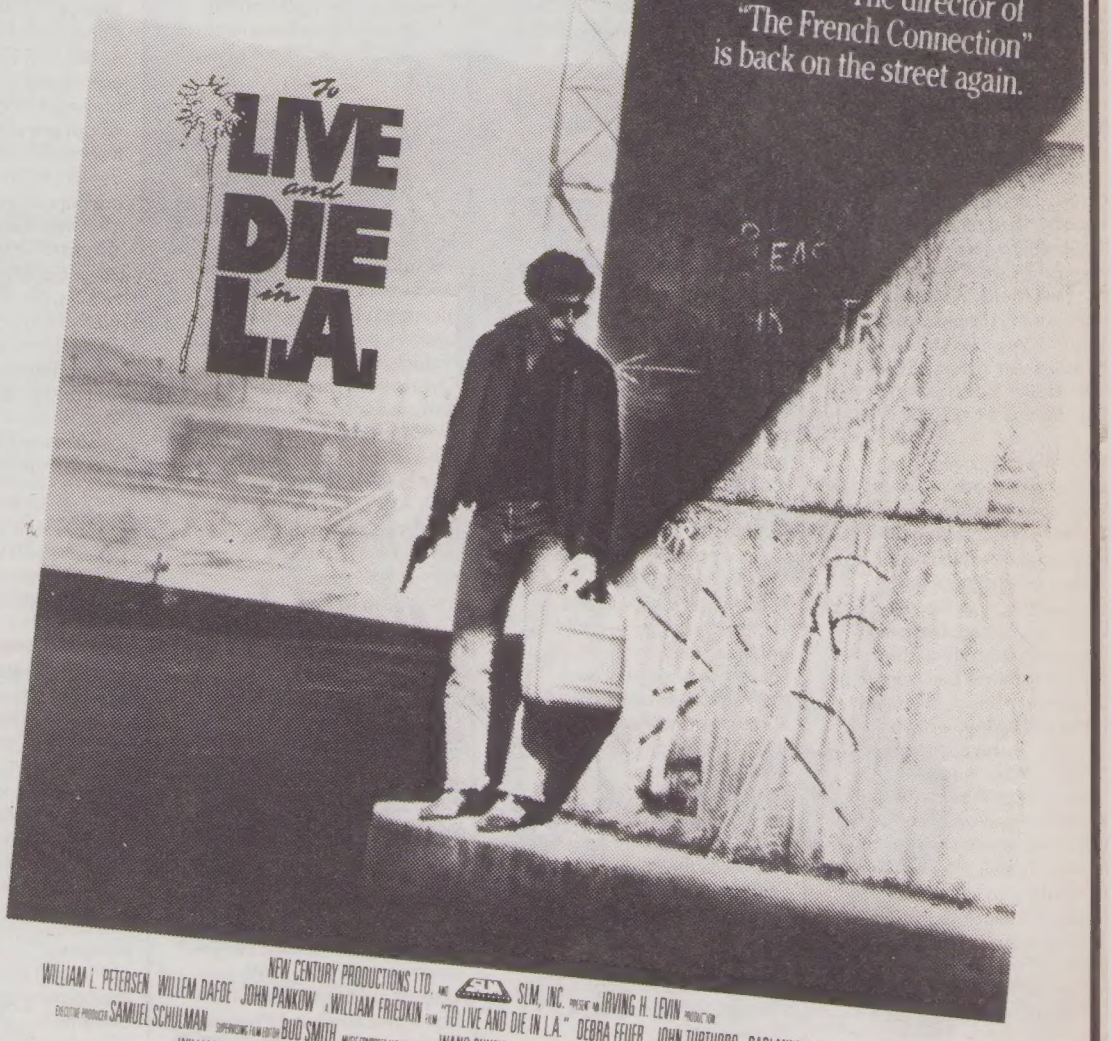
To LIVE and DIE in L.A.

Featuring SOUNDTRACK MUSIC BY
WANG CHUNG

COMMENCING MARCH 13

HOYTS CENTRE SYDNEY
Also at selected Suburban Cinemas

AND SOON FOR OTHER CAPITAL CITIES


To LIVE and DIE in L.A.
A Federal Agent is dead.
A Killer is loose.
And the City of Angels
is about to explode.
The director of
"The French Connection"
is back on the street again.
NEW CENTURY PRODUCTIONS LTD. SLM, INC. IRVING H. LEVIN
WILLIAM L. PETERSEN WILLEM DAFOE JOHN PANKOW WILLIAM FRIEDKIN "TO LIVE AND DIE IN L.A." DEBRA FEUER JOHN TURTURRO DARLANNE FLUEGEL DEAN STOCKWELL
SAMUEL SCHULMAN BUD SMITH WANG CHUNG BUD SMITH ROBBY MULLER GERALD PETIEVICH
WILLIAM FRIEDKIN & GERALD PETIEVICH IRVING H. LEVIN WILLIAM FRIEDKIN
SOUNDTRACK AVAILABLE ON CBS RECORDS AND CASSETTES
DISTRIBUTED BY UNITED INTERNATIONAL PICTURES PTY

CHARTS

MAINSTREAM JIVE

SINGLES

TW	LW	HP	TITLE	ARTIST	LABEL
1	10	1	•THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR	Dionne Warwick	RCA
2	1	1	WE BUILT THIS CITY	Starship	RCA
3	2	2	A GOOD HEART	Feargal Sharkey	EMI
4	4	3	SUN CITY	Artists United Against Apartheid	EMI
5	6	5	SEE THE DAY	Dee C. Lee	CBS
6	3	2	I'M YOUR MAN	Wham!	CBS
7	14	7	•SO MUCH FOR LOVE	Venetians	FES
8	5	4	BROKEN WINGS	Mr. Mister	RCA
9	16	9	•LOVE AN ADVENTURE	Pseudo Echo	EMI
10	9	3	SAY YOU, SAY ME (Title Song from 'White Nights')	Lionel Richie	RCA
11	12	9	SAY I'M YOUR No. 1	Princess	EMI
12	18	10	FACE THE FACE	Pete Townshend	WEA
13	—	13	•HIT THAT PERFECT BEAT	Bronski Beat	POL
14	—	14	•BLUE	Fine Young Cannibals	POL
15	7	7	CLOSE TO ME	Cure	WEA
16	—	16	•WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH, THE TOUGH GET GOING	Billy Ocean	EMI
17	—	17	THE WHOLE OF THE MOON	Waterboys	FES
18	8	1	SPECIES DECEASES (12" EP)	Midnight Oil	CBS
19	—	18	TARZAN BOY	Baltimora	EMI
20	—	20	THE SUN ALWAYS SHINES ON TV	A-Ha	WEA

ALBUMS

TW	LW	HP	TITLE	ARTIST	LABEL
1	1	1	BROTHERS IN ARMS	Dire Straits	POL
2	2	1	FOR THE WORKING CLASS MAN	Jimmy Barnes	FES
3	17	3	•FINE YOUNG CANNIBALS	Fine Young Cannibals	POL
4	6	5	THE HEAD ON THE DOOR	Cure	WEA
5	4	1	LITTLE CREATURES	Talking Heads	EMI
6	7	4	THE SINGLES COLLECTION	Spandau Ballet	FES
7	3	3	WHAT A LIFE	Divinyls	FES
8	15	8	•HERE'S TO FUTURE DAYS	Thompson Twins	RCA
9	5	5	GREATEST HITS	Cars	WEA
10	—	10	•FEARGAL SHARKEY	Feargal Sharkey	EMI
11	12	11	EASY PIECES	Lloyd Cole & the Commotions	POL
12	13	11	ROCK A LITTLE	Stevie Nicks	EMI
13	10	2	RECKLESS	Bryan Adams	FES
14	18	13	WHITNEY HOUSTON	Whitney Houston	RCA
15	8	4	RADIO SONGS, A BEST OF	Cold Chisel	WEA
16	11	8	PROMISE	Sade	CBS
17	—	17	•HEYDAY	Church	EMI
18	—	18	•SEVEN THE HARD WAY	Pat Benatar	FES
19	—	19	WHITE CITY	Pete Townshend	WEA
20	20	8	LOVE AN ADVENTURE	Pseudo Echo	EMI

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AUSTRALIA NOW

SINGLES

TF	LF	TITLE	ARTIST	LABEL
1	3	OUT OF CONTROL	Lime Spiders	Citadel
2	4	DON'T GO TO SYDNEY	Zimmermen	Au-Go-Go
3	13	THE CRUSHER	Psychotic Turnbuckles	Vi-Nil
4	11	VENUS IN LEATHER	Trilobites	Citadel
5	7	SAY GOODBYE	Hunters & Collectors	White
6	1	TANTALISED	Church	Parlophone
7	—	CONCRETE AND CLAY	Martin Plaza	CBS
8	2	SOMETHING	Spy V Spy	Powderworks
9	14	SURFIN' ON MY FACE	Hard Ons (EP)	Vi-Nil
10	8	INJUN JOE	Johnnys	Mushroom
11	17	TEARS ME IN TWO	Stems	Citadel
12	18	YOU'RE AN ANGEL	Happy Hate-Me-Nots	Waterfront
13	5	SAVE THE LABELS	Itchy Rat	Waterfront
14	6	SPECIES DECEASES (12" EP)	Midnight Oil	CBS
15	9	SIX PACK	Hoodoo Gurus	Big Time
16	10	LIKE WOW — WIPEOUT!	Hoodoo Gurus	Big Time
17	12	KING STREET	John Kennedy's Love Gone Wrong	Red Eye
18	—	JOHNNY AND DEE DEE	Eastern Dark	Waterfront
19	—	WIDE OPEN ROAD	Triffids	White/Hot
20	—	WHEN A WHISKEY BUYS A WHISKEY (EP)	Craven Fops	Bulb

ALBUMS

TF	LF	ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	1	HEYDAY	Church	Parlophone
2	3	KILL KILL KILL (Mini LP)	Painters & Dockers	Big Time
3	—	DOWN ON THE FARM	Cosmic Psychos	Mr. Spaceman
4	11	WHY MARCH WHEN YOU CAN RIOT?	Various	Aberrant
5	4	A NEST OF VIPERS	Exploding White Mice	Greasy Pop
6	2	WHAT A LIFE	Divinyls	Chrysalis
7	—	HARRY'S REASONS	Spy V Spy	Powderworks
8	5	EXPLODING HITS (Mini LP)	Shower Scene From Psycho	Elvis
9	15	YOU'VE ALL GOT A HOME TO GO TO	Feral Dinosaurs	Major
10	7	MARS NEEDS GUITARS	Hoodoo Gurus	Big Time
11	13	THIS TOWN IS NERVOUS	Wreckery	Hot
12	8	THE LITTLE DESERT	Not Drowning, Waving	Rampant
13	—	SUCH SWEET THUNDER	Blue Ruin	Major
14	10	BLUE BEAT PARTY	Blue Beat All Stars	Blue Beat
15	—	LOVE PLANET	Painters & Dockers	Big Time
16	12	IMMIGRANT TANGO (Mini LP)	James Griffin & the Subterraneans	Chase
17	16	GANGgajang	GANGgajang	True Tone

Thanks to DIZZY SPINNERS, FLOPPY DISK, MISSING LINK, PHANTOM, RED EYE & UMBRELLA MUSIC for their contributions to the chart.

NEW RELEASES

*Denotes Australasian artist

SINGLES

HOODOO GURUS* ..... Death Defying (EMI)
SPANIARDS* ..... What Can I Do? (EMI)
MARILLION ..... Heart Of Lothian (EMI)
JON BUTCHER AXIS ..... Sounds Of Your Voice (EMI)
PiL ..... Rise (VIR)
BALAAM & THE ANGEL ..... Day And Night (VIR)
GARY MOORE ..... Empty Rooms (VIR)
EURYTHMICS ..... It's Alright (Baby's Coming Back) (RCA)
FAR CORPORATION ..... Stairway To Heaven (RCA)
MR MISTER ..... Kyrie (RCA)
WHITNEY HOUSTON ..... How Will I Know (RCA)
FOREIGN BODY* ..... Talk About Love (RCA)
WAYNE SCOTT ..... Rambo (RCA)
SIMPLY RED .. Holding Back The Years (WEA)
MIKE & THE MECHANICS ..... Silent Running (WEA)
TOM PETTY & THE HEARTBREAKERS .. So You Want To Be A Rock'n'Roll Star (WEA)
ZZ TOP ..... Stages (WEA)
CHAKA KHAN ..... Own The Night (WEA)
IMMACULATE FOOLS ..... Save It (FES)
SURPRISE SURPRISE* ..... Cried All My Tears (FES)
TRIFFIDS* ..... Wide Open Road (FES)
JIMMY BARNES* ..... Ride The Night Away (FES)
THE SAINTS* ..... Just Like Fire Would (FES)
WIRE TRAIN ..... Last Perfect Thing (CBS)
SADE ..... Is It A Crime (CBS)
GO-BETWEENS* ..... Spring Rain (POL)
DIRE STRAITS ..... Walk Of Life (POL)
KATE & ANNA McGARRIGLE ..... Love Over And Over (POL)
GREEN ON RED .... Time Ain't Nothing (POL)
DAVID KNOPFLER ..... Shock Wave (POL)

ALBUMS

SPY V SPY* ..... Harry's Reasons (RCA)
QUANDO QUANGO ..... Pigs & Battleships (CBS)
MARTIN PLAZA* ..... Plaza Suite (CBS)
WIRE TRAIN ..... Between Two Words (CBS)
OINGO BOINGO ..... Dead Man's Party (WEA)
MARILLION ..... Fugazi (EMI)
VIOLENT FEMMES ..... The Blind Leading The Naked (EMI)
TOM WAITS ..... Rain Dogs (FES)
THE COLOUR FIELD ..... Virgins & Philistines (FES)
PAT BENATAR .... Seven The Hard Way (FES)
THE POGUES ..... Rum, Sodomy & The Lash (FES)
ROBERT PALMER ..... Riptide (FES)
FAIRPORT CONVENTION ..... Gladys' Leap (FES)
KATE & ANNA McGARRIGLE ..... Love Over And Over (POL)
PETE HAYCOCK'S CLIMAX ..... Total Climax (POL)

ESSEX MUSIC OF AUSTRALIA
PRESENTS

FOREIGN BODY

DEBUT
SINGLE

talk about love

AN
ESSEX MUSIC
PRODUCTION

RCA
RECORDS
AND TAPES
NO. 104515

GIG GUIDE

TOURS

LAURIE ANDERSON
Mar 29 Syd. Opera House
THE CHURCH
27 The Palace
28 Ferntree Gully
Mar 1 Central Club H.
2 Moomba Festival
4 Tivoli
5 St. George Sailing Club
6 Sweethearts
7 Dee Why H.
8 Castle Hill RSL
9 Newcastle Workers
11 Villa Noosa H.
12 The Roxy
13 Bombay Rock
19,20 Le Rox
BILLY CONNOLLY
27 Performing Arts Cent, Geelong
Mar 1 Princess Theatre, Launceston
2 Hobart Ent. Cent.
4-7 Syd Opera House
8 Shellharbour Workers
11 Thebarton Theatre, Adelaide
FAIRPORT CONVENTION
27 The Brickworks
28 The Barn
Mar 1 The Bridge H.
2 The Chaffey Theatre, Renmark
4 Wangaratta Town Hall
5 Bendigo Town Hall
6 Dallas Brookes Hall
7 Geelong Performing Arts
8 Lakes Entrance Youth Club
9 The Lady Bay H.
11 Newcastle Workers
12 Canberra Workers
13 Penrith Leagues
14 Hordern Pavilion
15 Mayne Hall, Qld Uni
16 Kuranda Amphitheatre
DR FEELGOOD
27 Manzil
28 Kuringai C.A.E.
Mar 1 Tropicana Club (early)
1 Village Green H. (late)
2 The Palace
3 Prince Of Wales H.
4 Eureka H, Geelong
5 Lady Bay H, Warrnambool
7 Le Rox
GO-BETWEENS
26,27 Tivoli
28 Dee Why H.
Mar 1 Local inn
3 Red Parrott, Perth
5 Wiz Bah
6 Burlington H, Dunbury
7 Murdoch Uni
8 Shenton Park H
9 The Equator
11 Eureka H, Geelong
13 Le Rox, Adelaide
14 Prince of Wales
15 The Club
16 Melb Uni
GONDWANALAND
28 Three Weeds H
Mar 1 Aust H, Cooma
3 Melb Uni (lunch)
The Stockade (night)
4 Deakin Uni, Geelong (lunch)
5 The Club
6 Monash Uni (lunch)
7 Armidale H (Melb)
9 The Tiger Lounge
10 The Stockade
11 The School of Nursing, Lincoln Inst. (lunch)
13 La Trobe Uni (lunch)
14 Jakades, Horsham
17 Warrambool Inst.
JAM TARTS & THE NANSING QUARTET
28, Mar 1 The Club
2 Moomba Rock Stage
3 Burwood State College (lunch)
5 R.M.I.T. (lunch)
6 Melb Uni (lunch)
6 Stockade H, Carlton (night)
8 The Club
9 Moomba Main Stage (afternoon)
Stockade H (night)
12 NSW Uni (lunch)
14 Graphic Arts Club
15 Caringbah Inn
17 Hip Hop Club
18 Macquarie Uni
19 Cambridge H, Newcastle
20 Armidale Uni
21,22 Long Yard, Tamworth
24 Sydney Uni, Manning Bar
26 W'gong Uni (lunch)
Nth W'gong H (night)
27 Rose Shamrock & Thistle
28 Graphic Arts Club
KATRINA AND THE WAVES
Mar 9 Gloucester Park Trotting Track
11,12 Le Rox
13 Arena Concert Hall, Geelong
14 Ferntree Gully H
15 Village Green H
16 The Palace
19 The Roxy
20 Byron Bay Arts Factory
21 Rockarena
22 Bombay Rock
23 Powerhouse
25 Newcastle Workers
26 Dapto Leagues
27 Sweethearts
28 Balmain Leagues
29 Selinas
30 Cronulla Workers
THE MONKEES
2 Twin Towns
4 Newcastle Workers
5 Hellenic Club
6 Central Coast Leagues
7 Manly Warringah Leagues
8 Rooty Hill RSL
9 Ingleburn RSL
11 Doyalson RSL
12 P'matta Leagues
13 Shellharbour Workers
14,15 St. George Leagues
16 Penrith Leagues
17-19 The Venue
NEW YORK STANDUP COMEDY
Jan 29-Feb 23 Athenaeum Theatre
Feb 25-Mar Canberra Arts Club
Mar 4-16 Sydney Trade Union Club
17-22 Space Theatre, Festival Centre
25 Todd Tav, Alice Springs
26,,27 Memorial Club, Alice Springs
31-Apr 5 Darwin Casino
SMOKIE
27 Castle Hill RSL
28 Bankstown Sports
Mar 1 Selinas
2 Orange Ex-Services
4 Tamworth Workers
5 Sth Grafton Ex-Services
6 Lismore Workers
7,8 Seagulls
9 Ipswich Showgrounds
11 Sawtell RSL
12 Newcastle Workers
13 Bankstown RSL
14 Central Coast Leagues
15 Shellharbour Workers
16 Wentworthville Leagues
18 Lithgow Workers Club
19 Hornsby RSL
20 Canberra Theatre
21 Lady Bay H, Warrnambool
22 Tarmac H
The Venue
23 Fosters Southern Aurora
24-26 Bridgeway H, Adelaide
SPY V SPY
26,27 Le Rox
28 Lady Bay, Warrnambool
1 The Venue
2 Eureka H, Geelong
5 Bega RSL
6 Canberra Workers
7 Mittagong RSL
8 Corrimal Leagues
9 Bombaderry RSL
12 Mudgee Soldiers' Club
13 Bathurst Mitchell C.A.E.
14 Parkes Leagues Club
15 Orange Ex-Services
STING
April 7 Syd Ent. Cent.
STEVIE RAY VAUGHN/THE FABULOUS THUNDERBIRDS
16 Hordern Pavilion
19 Brisbane Festival Hall
22 Melb. Festival Hall
24 Thebarton Theatre
27 Perth Concert Hall
VENETIANS
27 The Palace
28 Ferntree Gully
1 Central Club H
2 Moomba Festival
4 Tivoli
5 St George Sailing Club
6 Sweethearts
7 Dee Why H
11 Villa Nosa H.
8 Castle Hill RSL
12 The Roxy
9 Ncastle Workers
13 Bombay Rock
HAPPY HATE-ME-NOTS
28 Caringbah Inn
7 Selinas
HARD ONS
8 Manzil
PETE HAYCOCK'S CLIMAX
11 Canberra Workers
12,13 Tivoli
HEAD FIRST
28 St George Budapest
HIPSTERS
8 Royal H, Sutherland
HOODOO GURUS
27 W'gong Town Hall
28 NSW I.T. Great Hall
Mar 1 Bankstown RSL
HOWARD I KNOW
1 The Rest H
7 The Manning Bar, Syd Uni
8 Syd Cove H
HUNTERS & COLLECTORS
7 Macquarie Uni
8 Selinas
9 Newcastle Workers
IDIOM FLESH
12 Mosman H
ITCHY RAT
27 Local Inn
THE JOHNNYS
27 Sylvania H
1 Dee Why H
3 Tivoli
5 Hotel Manly
6 Caringbah Inn
7 Macquarie Uni
8 Kentucky Tav
9 Moby Dick Surf Club
JUMP INCORPORATED
27 Sweethearts
28 Mittagong RSL
1 Cardiff Workers
4 Beresfield Bowling Club
7 Wagga Rules Club
JUST A DRUMMER
28 Yugal Soccer Club
KAM SHA
Mar 1 Campbelltown RSL
PAUL KELLY & THE COLOURED GIRLS
28 Syd Trade Union Club
ROBBIE KRUPSKI & HOT CARGO 27 Sheilas
28 Balmain Leagues
1 Selinas
2 Fannys
5 Sheilas
THE KUE—TONE SPYS
6 Mosman H
LABRADOGS
27 Mosman H
6 Royal H, Sutherland
LAYABOUTS
26 W'gong Uni (lunch)
28 Uni of New England (lunch & night)
1 Sth Grafton Ex-Services
4,11 Cat & Fiddle H, Balmain
7 Bomaderry RSL
9 Unity Hall
14 Coalibah H, Merrylands
LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS
27 Tivoli
28 Mosman H
Mar 1 Local Inn
LIGHTNING ROCK
27 St James Tav
LOST CAUSE
1 Mosman H
LUCKY DINOSAURS
28 Yugal Soccer Club
MANIC DANCE
28 Illawarra Leagues
6 Manzil
8 Catalina Country Club
MISSING IN ACTION
27 Royals F.C. Canberra
28 Canberra Labour Club
1 Dapto Leagues
2 Caringbah Inn
4 Didi's
5 Penrith Leagues
6 Sheilas
7 Balmain Leagues
8 Doyalson RSL
9 Fannys
11 Collegians
12 Manzil
MUSTARD CLUB
27 Manzil
NAUGHTY RHYTHMS
Mar 1 Newcastle Workers
5 Didis
7 Wyong Leagues
8 Bankstown RSL
9 Moby Dick Surf Club
NOTATIONS
1 Mosman H
OL '55
2 Kincumber H
ONE ARM LOOSE
Mar 6 Macquarie Uni Bar
11 Pennant Hills Inn
PARDON ME BOYS
28, 6,7 Hip Hop Club
PASSION
2 Manzil Room
PERFECT STRANGERS
6 Sylvania H
7 Selinas
8 Dee Why H
PERSUADERS
6 Royal H, Sutherland
PINK SLIPS
7 Macquarie Uni
PLASTIC SMILES
6 Piccadilly H
THE PLATTS
6 Royal H, Sutherland
THE POUND
28 Greengate H
7 Blacktown Inn
PRIVATE
28 Uptown Circus, N'castle
6 Piccadilly H
7,9 Cronulla Workers
8 Newcastle Workers
12 Sheilas
THE PROMISE
6 Sheilas
7 Collegians R.C.
8 Syd. Cove Tav.
PSYCHOTIC TURNBUCKLES
8 Dee Why H
THE RADIATORS
28 Mittagong RSL
1 Cardiff Workers
2 Port Kembla RSL
4 Beresfield Bowling Club
5 Toronto Bowling Club
6 Royals F.C. (Canberra)
7 Wagga Rules Club
12 St. George Sailing Club
RAPTURE
6 Sylvania H
9 Tivoli
RAVEN
28 Hornsby RSL
1 Austral Bowling Club
5 Caringbah Inn
7 Connections Nightclub
8 Mona Vale H
THE REELS
6 Sylvania H
7 Macquarie Uni
9 Tivoli
RESISTANCE
6 St James Tav
THE ROLLING CLONES
Mar 1 Corrimal Leagues
7 Canberra Labour Club
8 Royals F.C.
HARRY ROSE SINGERS
12 Mosman H
ROSE TATTOO
27 Sweethearts
28 Blacktown RSL
1 Caringbah Inn
2 Toronto Bowling Club
ROXX
1 Hills Inn Tav
THE SAINTS
Mar 4 Riverina C.A.E.
5 Firehouse, Griffith
6 Old Canberra Inn
8 Campbelltown RSL
9 Avalon Beach RSL
11 Byron Bay Arts Factory
12 New England Uni
SAMURAI TRASH
7 Hills Inn Tav
STEVE SENSITIVE & THE ORCHESTRA OF SIGHS
1,8 Hip Hop Club
SILENT TYPES
28 Hills Inn
SILK & THE SLATTERNS
27 Hip Hop Club
69-ERS
1 Penrith Cent. Tav
7 Illawarra Leagues
8 Shanneys, H'ville
9 Hotel Bondi
THE SKEEM
27 Mosman H
6 Manzil
GEORGE SMILOVICI
28 Kentucky Tav
1 Corrimal Leagues
5 Sheilas
7 Seabreeze H
STACEY & THE SMASHERS
27 Namatyira H, Rooty Hill
28 Sheilas
1 Petersham Inn
2 General Bourke, P'matta
6 Blue Boar Inn, Bowral
7 Croydon H
8 Grand H, W'gong
THE STEMS
27 W'gong Town Hall
28 NSW I.T. — Great Hall
Mar 1 Syd. Cove Tav.
2 Avalon Beach RSL
STRANGE COLOURS
27 Campbelltown R.L.C.
28 Shellharbour Workers
1 Blacktown RSL
5 Connections Penrith
7 Bayview, Gladesville
8 Shanney's, H'ville
12 Greenfield Tav.
SURPRISE SURPRISE
28 Greengate H
1 Bull & Bush H
11 Manzil
TARAMIS
6 St James Tav
7 Royal H, Sutherland
8 Hills Inn
TRIFFIDS
5 Newcastle Workers
7 Seven Hills H
8 Caringbah Inn
10 Tivoli
12 Canberra
TRILOBITES
27 Jaggers
2 Avalan Beach RSL
UNDERCOVERS
7 Penrith Leagues
12 West Ryde H
UPS & DOWNS
27 Tivoli
28 Dee Why H
1 Bankstown RSL
7 NSW Uni, Roundhouse
8 Harold Park H
VOODOO LUST
27 Royal H, Sutherland
WA WA NEE
28 Piccadilly H
2 Caringbah
9 Manzil
A.T. WELLS
7 Taree RSL
8 Park Beach, Coffs Harbour
9 Byron Bay Arts Factory
WET TAXIS
7 Selinas
8 Mosman H
WILD WILD WOMEN
11 Tivoli
MATHEW WYATT
27 Gymea H
28 Hotel Bondi
YOUR FANATICS
2 Jolly Roger, Newcastle
Mar 3,10 Didis
5 Stallions, P'matta
6 Stallions, H'ville
7 Sheilas
8 Dapto Leagues
9 Kincumber H
12 Canberra Labour Club

VIC

JOE CAMILLERI & THE BLACK SORROWS
28, Mar 1 The Club
CHARLI
28 Billboard
THE DANCE HALL RACKETEERS
28 St Andrews H
1,2,4 Moomba
5 Royal Derby, Fitzroy
7,8 Maffra
DEKADANCE
27 Tropicana Club
28 Sundowner H
1 Royal H, Portland
2 The Palace
DIED PRETTY
28, Mar 1 Prince of Wales H.
THE EASTERN DARK
6 Go Fast Club
7 RMTT (early)
Prince of Wales (late)
9 Moomba
GEISHA
28 The Venue
Mar 1 Pacific H, Lorne
JAMES GRIFFIN & THE SUBTERRANEANS
28 The Venue
1 Central Club H
HAREM SCAREM
28 Melb. Uni
HUXTON CREEPERS
28 Melb. Uni
THE JOHNNYS
11 Bendigo College
12 Lady Bay H.
JOHNNY SAID SO
1 Royal Saxon H.
JUMP INCORPORATED
8 Village Green
9 The Palace
12 St George Sailing Club
PAUL KELLY & THE COLOURED GIRLS
5 The Club
7 The Venue
8 Central Club H
9 Royal Saxon H
LOONEE TUNES
28 The Centre Club H
1 Stockade H
MAJOR MINOR
28 The Venue
NO NONSENSE
28 Chisholm Inst
1 Princes Hwy H
PSEUDO ECHO
27 Billboard
28 Monash Uni
2 Bridge H, Mordalloc
REAL LIFE
28 Billboard
1 The Venue
THE RADIATORS
8 Village Green
9 The Palace
FRANK SAVAGE'S MENSLAND
28 Melb Uni
SLAUGHTERMEN
28 Melb Uni
SPANIARDS
27 Panton Hill H
1 Prospect Hill H
THE STRANGELOVES
28 Dava H
TALK THAT WALK
27 Billboard
KARL VAN EST
28 21st Century Dance Club
1 Roxy H
WILD SCIENCE
27 Tropicana Club
28 Sundowner H, Corio
THE WRECKERY
28 East Brunswick Club

SA

JAMES GRIFFIN & THE SUBTERRANEANS
9 Le Rox
VINCE JONES
5,6 Le Rox
LUNAR CIRCUS
27-Mar 8 Go Klub, Adelaide
NICO
9 Le Rox

QLD

KEVIN BORICH EXPRESS
Mar 4 Cityview H, Ipswich
5 Roxy
6 Villa Noosa
7 Jet Club
8 Bombay Rock
9 Stuarts
CELIBATE RIFLES
28 Q.I.T. Refect
1 Surfers Paradise, Surf Club
DELLTONES
5 Beenleigh Tav
7 Dalby Comm Cent
8 Kingaroy Town Hall
9 Pittsworth Town Hall
10 Goondiwindi Anglican Hall
11 Chinchilla Shire Hall
12 The Kings Theatre, Warwick
DOGS NEXT DOOR
27 Castle H
28 Country Club H
2,4,6 Castle H
DYNAMIC HEPNOTICS
11 East End H, Bundaberg
12 Civic Theatre, Gladstone
LET'S GO NAKED
28 Q.I.T. Refect
THE PROMISE
27 Mansfield Tav
28 Bombay Rock
1 Jet Club
2 Stuarts Alexander
5 Toronto Bowling Club
TRIFFIDS
28 Q.I.T. Refect

WA

PETER HAYCOCK'S CLIMAX
3 Floreat H
4 Pinocchio's Niteclub
5 Charles H
6 Rockwells
7 Burlington H, Bunbury
8 Cloverdale H
9 Summer Rock '86

HANG 'EM HIGH

Mon Mar 3 Tivoli
Wed Mar 5 Hotel Manly
with **The Johnnys**

HOW TO PLACE YOUR DATES

ISSUE	GIGS COVERED	DEADLINE
280	13 Mar - 26 Mar	5 Mar
281	27 Mar - 9 Apr	19 Mar
282	10 Apr - 23 Apr	2 Apr
283	24 Apr - 7 May	16 Apr
284	8 May - 21 May	30 Apr
285	22 May - 4 Jun	14 May

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NSW

ADOLPHUS
28 Jaggers
6 Mosman H.
8 Royal H, Sutherland
ALLIGATORS
Mar 1 Dee Why H
AMARIA
28 Royal H, Sutherland
8 Hills Inn
ASSASIN
28 Royal H, Sutherland
AUSTEN TAYSHUS
28,6-8 Hip Hop Club
BABY LOVES TO CHA CHA
Mar 1 Moby Dicks
2 Nth Cronulla H
6 Manzil
BEATNIX
28 Taree RSL
2 St George Budapest
6 Sheiks
7 St Marys Band Club
8 Seabreeze H
12 Images
DICK BENT & THE BENTNICK FAMILY
7 Caringbah Inn
8 Jaggers
BLADE
27 St James Tav
7 Royal H, Sutherland
BLEACH BOYS
28 Wagga Aust Rules F.C.
1 Penrith Leagues
8 Market St. Tav
BLUES BROS REVIVAL
11 Warhope H.
12 Penrith Leagues
DAVID BOND
27 Auburn H
28,7 Vicar of Wakefield
1,8 Fortuna Palace
5,12 Eastwodd H
6 Floyds
KEVIN BORICH EXPRESS
28 Corrimal Leagues
BRING PHILLIP
28 Yugal Soccer Club
JOE CAMILLERI'S BLACK SORROWS
11 Tivoli
12 Sheiks, Ermington H.
CATTLETRUCK
28 Kuringai College Advance Ed
1 Syd Cove Tav
CELIBATE RIFLES
7 Jaggers
8 Selinas
THE CHALLENGE
28 West Ryde H
1 Avalon Beach
5,12 Pennant Hills Inn
7 Didi's Brookvale
8 Cousins, W'gong
CHASIN' THE TRAIN
12 Newcastle Workers
CHOIRBOYS
9 Port Kembla Leagues
CLUB SKA
4,11 Hip Hop Club
7 Mosman H
THE COCKROACHES
7 Wyong Leagues
8 Bankstown RSL
9 Seabreeze H
CRASH POLITICS
1 Royal H, Sutherland
CREEDENCE RISING
28 Moby Dicks
4 Stallions, H'ville
CRUSADER
1 Hills Inn Tav
CRYPTICS
Mar 1,8 Rose of Aust. H
1 Simones
DECKCHAIRS OVERBOARD
28 Hills Inn
DECLINE OF THE REPTILES
28 Royal H, Sutherland
DEE MINOR & THE DISCHORDS
1 Shellharbour Workers
7 Caringbah Inn
8 Jaggers
DELLTONES
27 Wangaratta Town Hall
28 Wagga Wagga Leagues
1 Young Services Club
2 Cootamundra Ex-Services
DER STRAZA
27 Sweethearts
1 Caringbah Inn
2 Toronto Bowling Club
7 Campbelltown Leagues
8 Piccadilly H.
DO.RE.MI
4 Sylvania H
5 Mosman H
7 NSW Uni Roundhouse
9 Parliament House Steps, Canberra
PAT DRUMMOND
27,7 The Rest H
1,8 Nth W'gong H
4,11 Pennant Hills Inn
DYNAMIC HEPNOTICS
7 Lithgow Workers Club
8 Dubbo Showground
THE EASTERN DARK
27 Tivoli
28 Caringbah Inn
EASY MONEY
28 Lumeah Inn
1 Cambridge Tav
8 Connections
PHIL EMMANUEL & ROCKOLA
Mar 3 Macquarie Uni
4 Pennant Hills Inn
5 W'gong Uni (lunch)
5 Manzil
6 Didis
7 Collegians G.C.
9 General Bourke H
FAT TIME
27 Danaloo H
28 Selinas
1 Palm Beach (arvo)
Manzil (night)
2 Palm Beach (arvo)
5 Images
6 Hotel Manly
7 Sylvania Hotel
8 Penrith Leagues
9 Illawarra Master Builders
THE FLIES
7 Hopetoun H
8 Avalon RSL
FOREIGN BODY
27 Manzil
THE GAME
8 Hotel Manly
THE GENERATION
27 Hotel Manly
28 P'matta Leagues
4 Newcastle Workers
5 Hellenic Club, Canberra
6 Central Coast Leagues
7 P'matta Leagues
8 Nth Syd Aust. Rules F.C.
11 Doyalson RSL
12 P'matta Leagues
DAVID GIBBONS & EVA SZABO
28,3,5,7,10,12 Observer H
THE GLAM SAVAGES
12 Hip Hop Club
GROOVIN' GHOULIES
1 Royal H, Sutherland
HANG 'EM HIGH
3 Tivoli
5 Hotel Manly

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Fairport Convention
The Greatest Folk Rock Band of all time!
"THE GREATEST FOLK ROCK BAND OF ALL TIME"
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and
The Bushwackers
on selected gigs.

FEB
27 The Brickworks, Adelaide
28 The Barn, Mt Gambier
MAR
1 The Bridge Hotel, Mildura
2 The Chaffey Theatre, Renmark
4 Wangaratta Town Hall
5 Bendigo Town Hall
6 Dallas Brookes Hall
7 Geelong Performing Arts
8 Lakes Entrance Youth Club
9 The Lady Bay Hotel, Warrnambool
11 Newcastle Workers Club
12 Canberra Workers Club
13 Penrith Leagues
14 Hordern Pavilion
15 Mayne Hall, Qld Uni
16 Kuranda Amphitheatre, Cairns

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SMOKIE 1986 TOUR DATES

Feb 27-Castle Hill RSL Club
Feb 28-Bankstown Sports Club
Mar 1-Selinas
Mar 2-Orange Ex-Services Club
Mar 4-Tamworth Workers Club
Mar 5-South Grafton Ex-Services Club
Mar 6-Lismore Workers Club
Mar 7-Seagulls Leagues Club
Mar 8-Seagulls Leagues Club
Mar 9- TBA
Mar 11-Sawtell RSL Club
Mar 12-Newcastle Workers Club
Mar 13-Bankstown RSL Club
Mar 14-Central Coast Leagues Club
Mar 15-Shellharbour Workers Club
Mar 16-Wentworthville Leagues Club
Mar 18-Lithgow Workers Club
Mar 19-Hornsby RSL Club
Mar 20-Canberra Theatre
Mar 21-Lady Bay Hotel Warrnambool
Mar 22-Tarmac Hotel
The Venue
Mar 23-Fosters Southern Aurora
Mar 24- TBA
Mar 25-Bridgeway Hotel Adelaide
Mar 26-Bridgeway Hotel Adelaide

PLAY.1009

FAIRPORT CONVENTION

Folk Rock On An 80s Roll

BASTIONS of that much maligned musical form, folk-rock, Fairport Convention started life in London in '67, when acid rock and psychedelia were the prevailing fashions, and split in '79, when punk had once again made outsiders of them — to all but their devoted fans.

And now, here we are in 1986, a time of blasting guitars, heavy dance beats and bombastic haircuts, and Fairport are back with a new album. *Gladys' Leap* is their first since '78, and to cap it all they're about to embark on an Australian tour. I asked Dave Pegg (bassist and almost original member) what exactly do Fairport Convention have to say in 1986 ?

"Firstly, please come and see us! One of the best things about this current lineup is the instrumental prowess. We have as much to offer musically as many current rock bands — even to those who are frightened of the word 'folk'. On our recent UK tour we played at a lot of universities where a lot of the audiences were young and not familiar with us, and the response was great. It underlined our feelings that we are valid to a current audience."

Between '67 and '79 Fairport Convention released 16 albums (one of them recorded live at Sydney Opera House in '73). Commercial success was never the strong point of any of these releases, in fact there was only ever one hit — a French version of Dylan's *If You Gotta Go, Go Now*. I wondered if this commercial failure was the main reason for the breakup seven years ago?

"Yes, it got to the stage where the only way we could keep the band together was by playing live. The music scene in England was depressing us."

And you were depressing the music scene?

"Well, there was no interest from the media, or record company, so we bowed out."

Australia seems to have become something of a touring graveyard for once-great names, still trying to scrape a living on past glories. Some people may file Fairport in that category. Since their demise, each year has seen a reunion festival in a far-flung corner of rural England, slotted in between the other commitments of those involved.

Why the serious bid to come back all of a sudden?

"Every year the reunions have got bigger and bigger, and every year we put out a tape of the show. It just got to the stage where we decided we really must come up with something new. That decision coincided with a period when I had no commitments with Jethro Tull, and Simon Nicol and Dave Mattacks were in a similar position. So we went into my studio, and *Gladys' Leap* was the outcome."

Although a new Fairport Convention album would be all too easy to write off without a fair trial, a careful listening does in fact elicit a degree of interesting ideas and an expansion from the standard folk-rock idiom. The title track comes from the recent story of a 65-year-old postwoman named Gladys, who spent 35 years jumping over a small river, deep in the heart of the English countryside, as a short cut on her delivery round. The spot is now immortalised on maps of the area.

I pondered the reason for this story as inspiration for a long-playing record. Dave informed me that it was simply something that appealed to the humorous side of Fairport, and their English eccentricity. After hearing the said piece of music at a concert to which she was invited by the band, Gladys commented: "It's very catchy. I thoroughly enjoyed the concert, and was treated like a VIP."

While we're on the subject of the country, the current interest in that musical genre has, to a large extent, gone hand in hand with the folk music influence rearing its head in new bands such as the Pogues. What d'you reckon, Dave?

"I appreciate the spirit of the Pogues, but musically I detest them. Fairport are just as valid, and have a bigger capacity for intoxicating liquor. I like some of the American bands, like R.E.M., and I think it's great that acoustic artists like James Taylor are touring Australia."

Hmm... James Taylor, eh? Not quite what I was getting at, but never mind...

Fairport, over the years, have become somewhat notorious for the number of musicians who have passed through their ranks: Sandy Denny, the currently much-praised Richard Thompson, and Trevor Lucas — to name but a few. Oh, and of course Dave Swarbrick, whose fiddle-playing became possibly their best known trademark. Contrary to what you may read elsewhere, Swarbrick is no longer able to play with Fairport because of his hearing. Electric music, his doctors have warned him, is strictly a no-no, and so his time is consumed with matters acoustic.

Folk'n'roll sure takes its toll! With Dave having been such an integral part of their sound, I wondered how the band felt about him being unable to play on this album, and to play a part in the ensuing bout of activity...

"It's the first time we've ever conceived of the idea of playing without Dave, and unless we'd have found someone of the calibre of Ric Sanders, we would never have toured. There would have been too much at stake. But with the three-person nucleus of myself, Simon Nicol and Dave Mattacks working on the album, we've all put that much more into the project. And with the additional help of Ric, and multi-instrumentalist Martin Allcock, it's been a greaat rejuvenating process. And those five will be the lineup touring Australia."

This time the 'reunion' seems to be a serious attempt to break new ground. As I spoke to Dave, work had even been started on a new album. It will be a collection of instrumental pieces entitled *Expletive Delightives*. This year's festival is all set up, with Redgum as special guests, and next year is the Fairport 20th anniversary. Just goes to show you really can't keep an old folk-rocker down.

You will have your own chance to decide whether Fairport Convention can play a relevant part in today's world of 'modern' music when they tour here in February/March. And so to the next revival...

GRANT CALTON

MELBOURNE DATES:
February 28 THE CLUB (with the Black Sorrows)
March
1 THE CLUB (with the Black Sorrows)
2 MOOMBA ROCK STAGE
3 BURWOOD STATE COLLEGE (lunchtime)
5 RMIT (lunchtime)
6 MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY (lunchtime)
STOCKADE HOTEL, Carlton (night)
8 THE CLUB (with the Black Sorrows)
9 MOOMBA MAIN STAGE (afternoon)
STOCKADE HOTEL (night)

SYDNEY & N.S.W. DATES:
12 N.S.W. Uni. (lunchtime)
14 Graphic Arts Club (plus The Herd)
15 Caringbah Inn (with The Cockroaches)
17 Hip Hop Club 18 Macquarie Uni
19 Cambridge Hotel, Newcastle
20 Armidale Uni. 21-22 Long Yard, Tamworth
24 Sydney Uni. (Manning Bar)
26 Wollongong Uni (lunchtime)
Nth Wollongong Hotel (night)
27 Rose Shamrock & Thistle
28 Graphic Arts

CRAVEN FOPS

Ghetto Blasters

(pic: FRANCINE McDOUGALL)

SO WHEN I said I was doing a story on Craven Fops for RAM, they all laughed. "Come on, you're kidding," they said. And I said: "Oh yeah, who's kidding who?"

There must be something to these Fops though, because they just finished fourth in the Best Local Unrecorded Act category of the RAM Readers' Poll.

Seemingly, there's something of the Craven Fop in all of us: sometimes, you just gotta let go, run out of control, make a total fool of yourself, and the wowsers and the oppressors be damned... As if anyone could approach the dementia of Daniel Morphett, the stringbean singer with legs like licorice, vibratingly obscenely, who whips a harmonica out of his back pocket as if a switchblade and blows up an unholy gale...

... The four remaining Fops push out a power-drive thrash behind him: James A. Scanlon wrestles for the spotlight with an outrageous litany of guitar-hero routines, delivered from atop anything taller than he already isn't; and while Kit Quarry's rumbustious drumming is equally volatile, rhythm guitarist Penny Quarry (they're sisters) and bassist Bryan King provide the earthbound thread that ties it all together.

In the Craven Fops, the spirit of punk rock returns with a vengeance. A minimum, or at least an innocence of technique is no deterrent to a maximum of energy and determination, an idiosyncratic brashness and originality.

"Well, what was it exactly you wanted to know?" demands James Scanlon, 'social anthropologist', *raconteur* — read: loudmouth — and well-known boy about town.

James, myself, Daniel Morphett and Kit Quarry are gathered around a table in a Darlinghurst pub, which strikes me as entirely appropriate: do the Craven Fops not specialise in drinking songs?

"Not all the songs are about drinking," James doth protest. "Some are about lost love, and being broke..."

"And madness, there's a lot about madness," adds Daniel.

"We might be a drinking band," says James, "but we're definitely not a *shouting* band!" He squeals, as he's wont to do, in appreciation of his own wit.

The Craven Fops' fortunes may soon improve however, having just released a debut single, *When A Whiskey Buys A Whiskey/Mustard* (on the new Bulb Records label). The record represents an attempt by the Fops to expand their appeal beyond original bases in inner-Sydney. Or dare I say Darlinghurst, where the Fops are, after all, a popular party attraction. Ghettoised, anyone?

"No, that's bullshit," sneers James, who lives just around the corner. "We're going to Melbourne next week!"

"Darlinghurst's alright," Daniel decides, "but it's not the end of the world."

Of course not. The Craven Fops are simply a young band just starting out. Taking things as they come. Moving certainly not backwards, but somewhere in between sideways and forwards. Incredibly, as I work on this very piece, the phone rings: it's Dave Novik, new A&R man at CBS, who wants to know how to find the Fops...

"If you want to know my true ambition," James is off again, "this is it — in a moment of glory, while not only wanking out the greatest lead break that hasn't been heard for weeks, but also making a fantastically fiery speech, and then suddenly I spontaneously combust in front of 100,000 screaming fans!"

"Some people might regard a band as being a total thing in itself," Kit takes up, "but a band is made up of individuals, and they try and work together, but in this band everyone's very opinionated, so you can't really ask one person a question and get an impression of what the whole band thinks."

"It's the spirit of energy," chimes Daniel. "It's the feeling of being exhilarated by music."

"It might be a similar attitude," adds Kit.

"A lot of stuff went on years ago, and it was great, and it wasn't happening anymore," continues Daniel, who from day one was *the* biggest fan Sydney's X ever had. "Personally, my heroes all went down the drain. And I wanted to recreate the feeling they gave me."

But how do five such strong individuals come together and gel as a coherent musical entity?

"Because it's *music*, and that's what music does," says James. "It brings people together, people who wouldn't ordinarily want to be in the same room. With music, you can transcend anything."

Since their earliest performances in late 1984, the Craven Fops' rough-hewn sound may not have been refined any, but certainly it's distilled a stronger essence. Besides their achievement in the RAM Readers' Poll, the Craven Fops were runners-up in last year's Strawberry Hills Hotel Band Competition. The prize, to record one side of a single shared with winners the Sheiks (?!), hasn't yet been honoured. James Scanlon is determined to sue, but meantime the Fops made their own double-A-side. *Whiskey/Mustard* is really only marred by a muffled sort of sound...

"We did record that ourselves, that was us playing on it," James giggles. "We hired all these session musicians but they didn't turn up. Bastards. Anyway, luckily we can play a lot better than that now, otherwise we wouldn't be in the business any more."

"It starts out as intuitive," says Kit, "and you go along and you learn a bit, and that's good. When I began I'd never had lessons, but now I want to, because there are things you want to do but can't."

Clearly, this is not a band that suffers from tunnel-vision. No, not ghettoised at all. The Craven Fops have got something to say we can all do with hearing.

"Even though people think we're 'inner-city'," says Kit, "I reckon we're universal. Our first proper fan came from Mona Vale."

"Yeah, and he never came back," James scowls. "If you're reading this now, mate, you're a creep!"

"Yeah, but he liked the band because he liked the band, he didn't give a fuck what the imagery or the context was, he just liked the music," retorts Kit. "And that's all that matters. If music's good you can like it, it doesn't matter if it's X or Brian Eno. It doesn't matter whether you're *supposed* to like it or not, or whether you live in Darlinghurst or Vaucluse. If you're the kind of person that's real, then you'll respond to something else that's real."

At this, even James is silent. Daniel's just staring at me. Must be my shout.

CLINTON WALKER

MARGINAL ERA

Now Hear This!

IT'S BEEN the normal Australian experience for a new band to 'pay their dues' by gigging solidly and building a 'market base' before entering the studio under the watchful paternal eye of some record company. Not so Marginal Era, who, without setting foot inside a Melbourne pub, have already recorded their debut album and released a single, *See, Hear, Touch*.

But the band is yet to play a note in public.

"I don't think we actually wanted to put a single out and *not* play," explains vocalist/guitarist Paul Agar in the understatement of the year so far. To explain further: just as Marginal Era were poised to promote their single, drummer Vincent Leigh left to replace Anthony Argiro in Pseudo Echo. Not that Agar nor bassist Slav Hodinge begrudge Vince's career-wise defection to his brother's band, but it did somewhat short-circuit Marginal Era's promotion plans, with the inevitable result that *See, Hear, Touch* was virtually lost in the Christmas rush. Unseen, unheard — and untouched by human hands.

Needless to say, Marginal Era are seeking a new drummer, and understandably are taking their time ("We don't want another situation where someone isn't 100 percent dedicated," says Slav). They don't believe, however, that their slow and measured approach has lost them any points.

"The thing is," says Paul, "we're pretty confident about our songs, and we believe in them. At the same time, of course, we're pretty wary about the way we've gone about everything."

"Record companies don't usually sign people up until they've had a year or two on the road," adds Slav. "This company (*Centre Records*) is one of the few who have a different attitude."

Paul and Slav are the nucleus of Marginal Era, and the album — recorded at producer Mark Moffatt's studio in Queensland — was completed with the aid of session musicians. Although the single was overlooked, they had few great expectations for it.

"We wanted the single to basically introduce us. We didn't want it to be a hit — although we wouldn't have minded," laughs Slav.

Understatement aside, the first priority now is to actually start playing. As Paul points out, "The album will be released in March at the earliest, to give us a few months of actually being out there playing and releasing another single."

Having recruited a temporary drummer in Steve Graham, the band hope to be on the road within five weeks. This will hopefully give Marginal Era the recognition they missed with their first single. For they're a band that deserves to be seen and heard — touch wood.

SUSIE KERATIOTIS

DOWN AMONG THE Z-MEN

John Dowler at right (pic: MARK GREEN)

JOHN DOWLER used to be Young Modern. Now a little older, wiser and *post*-modern, he talks to MARA SMARRELLI about his sleek new vehicle for the 80s, the ZIMMERMEN (no relation to Bob).

YESTERDAY John Dowler played the music of the early 60s. Today he plays uplifting 80s jingle-jangle guitar pop. His band the Zimmermen play songs that depend on arrangements rather than beat and drive alone, and their refreshingly melodic sound has wafted through Melbourne since early 1984.

Dowler's past is a band ahead of its time — Adelaide's Young Modern, who some would say spearheaded the 80s 'guitar renaissance' that gave us the Sunnyboys. It's just possible that when punk arrived in Australia in '77, a band like Young Modern may have been somewhat more accessible in suburbia than the strident, disaffected 'new musik'. It was a time, John says, when there was no independent scene — just the beginnings of a new wave, and the last of the old backwash.

"It wasn't like a kid's thing, like now there are a lot of really young people who in the last four or five years have been picking up the guitar and just making music. That just wasn't accessible to people. I was 23 or 24 before I joined my first band, and there wasn't the diversity or the outlet like public radio."

At a time when the likes of the Angels, Cold Chisel and the Radiators held sway in Sydney, audiences didn't exactly take to Young Modern. The feeling was mutual.

"Melbourne and Adelaide are a lot more English. Sydney people seem to have a different sense of humour. They're more Americanised, they're really pushy — but apart from that they're really nice people. I didn't like the weather up there either," Dowler adds, laughing. "It was too humid."

No hard feelings. The Zimmermen's debut single *Don't Go To Sydney* is charting well on Sydney's alternative listings, and anyone who presented a NSW driving license at their single launch was admitted free. Sydney would appear to have taken to what Dowler calls a "novelty song exploring the Sydney and Melbourne rivalry".

Born in Dublin, a youthful looking 35 year old Dowler is refreshingly unassuming. So much so that onstage, albeit holding back as is his wont, he can look uncomfortable — yet he asserts that he enjoys live work more than mere appearances suggest.

"I tend to be very self-conscious on stage — I find the older I get, the more self-conscious I get. I feel really uncomfortable in an artificial situation where you're supposed to be a pop star for an hour or something."

At 11 years of age, Dowler moved to Adelaide where he completed his schooling. Later he returned to Europe for five years, living in London and Amsterdam and working as a clerk or in record stores. On his return to Australia a string of bands unravelled before Young Modern, leading to his formation of the Zimmermen with Michael Holmes on guitar, bassist/backing vocalist Pedro, Neil Osborn on percussion and guitarist/co-vocalist Peter Tulloch.

"It's basically the sort of music I've always been interested in doing, and it's the most successful. I mean Young Modern were quite successful, but really we weren't very good players — the musicianship wasn't all that good. I've always had this obsession with this certain sort of sound, and *Don't Go To Sydney* is probably the closest I've gotten to it."

... And it's the very sound that's been likened to R.E.M., Green On Red and the Byrds.

"I think there's a really superficial resemblance — I mean, we have a sort of jingle-jangle guitar sound, but I don't think our songs are anything like theirs. I don't think we're like any of those guitar bands that have been really successful because we don't have that really obvious 60s revival thing that someone like the Stems have, for instance. That's probably going to go against us in the long run because we're just outside the fashionable pale, so we're not getting huge hysterical sort of reactions. I think the single has succeeded because it just turned out well and the song is amusing in its own way.

"I've always found it particularly challenging to write love songs," he continues. "I've always had a really hard time trying to do those because they're so embarrassing. That's still the thing I'd like to do best. Peter Tulloch writes fabulous love songs, though. I've only just started writing songs that I've been happy with in the last three or four years; I think it's because I just didn't have the musical knowledge. I always put singing first and left the guitar playing to other people, and it's really important to be able to play to write songs."

Enough for an album, in fact. *Rivers Of Corn* has already been recorded, and is set for a March release — like the single, on Bruce Milne's Au Go Go label. It's not, however, John Dowler's first foray into the long-playing format. Over 1981-2 he recorded a solo album with producer Martin Armiger, featuring contributions from such prominent Melbourne players as Andrew Pendlebury (now with the Slaughtermen) and Steve Cummings. Business hassles prevented its release, but several of the songs appear on *Rivers Of Corn*, including *I Like To Fight With My Wife* and *Seventeen*.

"I wasted three years doing that LP because the money was only coming in dribs and drabs over that period of time. I imagine if I died in a car crash or something, it would come out!"

These days, Dowler is cautious. He has no great expectations for the Zimmermen, preferring to keep the band as more of a hobby. Besides, he finds touring a physical drain — a recent trip to Adelaide left him almost terminally exhausted...

"I just can't keep up with all the drinking and lack of sleep. I mean, if I was to do that on any full-time basis I think I'd be dead inside two or three weeks!"

Hopefully not before the Zimmermen ignore their own sound advice and make a (no doubt) similarly exhausting trip north. Come back to Sydney, John — all is forgiven!

MARA SMARRELLI

FEB

26 WOLLONGONG UNI (LUNCH)

28 UNI OF NEW ENGLAND

MAR

1 SOUTH GRAFTON EX-SERVICES

2 BYRON BAY ARTS FACTORY

4 CAT & FIDDLE , BALMAIN

7 BOMADERRY RSL

9 UNITY HALL HOTEL , BALMAIN

11 CAT & FIDDLE, BALMAIN

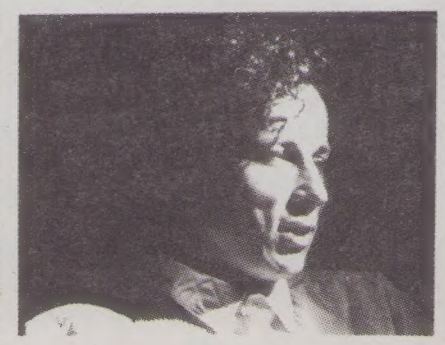
14 COOLIBAH HOTEL , MERRYLANDS

LAY ABOUTS

BOPPIN' THE BLUES

BRING PHILIP

Take Him To Berlin



Clockwise from top left: Dean Alderson, Ilmar Karuso, John Robertson, Kathy Wemyss, Simon H. (pic: Andrew McDonald)

IF EVER a year belonged to Bring Philip, the year was 1983. Just about everyone was excited about this new band who created dense, problematic, seemingly intelligent music. People talked about the intensity that could pour forth from their stage; people wanted to know more, wanted to see more.

Bring Philip complied with public demand for a while and played regular gigs. Each was of epic proportions. Equipment took hours to assemble and then put on stage, tapes had to be cued and organised, minds had to be placed in the right frame. The set would then be performed in semi-darkness, band and audience alike sinking into deep concentration. Musical pieces were invariably between seven and ten minutes long, the sound was ponderous, heavy duty and aggressive. Bela Bartok had zilch on this mob.

Total, undivided attention is a temporary thing, especially within the confines of the (yawn) inner city where your back would be plastered against a poker machine and some drunk would spill beer down the front of your best blacks. Concentration wandered... By 1984, Bring Philip were filed in the 'too hard' basket and people went out to dance.

The band by this time was embroiled in a series of upsets, culminating in the dismissal of drummer Eddie Duquemin. ("On the day we decided that he had to go, we got this review saying he was the only decent thing about the band!") So saying ta-ta to Eddie introduced a whole range of musical changes — far greater than the sacking of a drummer necessitated...

"People were always telling us we were totally overwhelming, and they couldn't handle us for more than one or two shows," says Ilmar Karuso, he of the astonishing vocal ability that is somewhat akin to being immersed in a large vat full of molten club chocolate.

"We were also accused of being laborious, and a wilfully difficult band musically, but I don't think that's really valid. There was so much to do on stage if we wanted to get the sound right. For instance Dean (*Alderson*) would be playing bass with one hand and keyboards with the other, while counting out bars for the next musical change. We've whittled that complexity down now, learnt about mixes, and we're more compact. We're definitely more approachable."

"Yeah, we don't look like surly bastards anymore," laughs Simon Hunt. "It's not the ideal public image. People tell us it's a real surprise to find us all so outgoing."

In 1985, Bring Philip played eight times. Hardly a massive performance log from a band who by that time were sure they'd come up with something as close to the Grade A1 musical formula as they were going to get.

"There's no need to play to prove your worth," says Ilmar. "People have this idea about what you *must* do, like go out and play the suburbs. Why? I don't want to play the suburbs. I don't want 15 year old kids in St. Mary's listening to the music if I have to grovel and crawl to them just to get them to listen. It just doesn't interest me. If they listen and they like it, that's fine, but we're not going to kill ourselves to get to them."

Simon says that the suburbs would have been the next step, if the band had chosen to refine their sound into straight synth-pop: "When we say we've refined the sound, it means that it's more *compact*, easier to play. It doesn't mean it's homogenous or anything, going commercial. We aren't 'ambitious' as musicians, so we don't feel that pressure anyway. We've been doing films and videos and lots of other things."

"It has been hard to figure out who our audience is here," muses Ilmar. "In the end we decided, well, if they don't like us, we'll go somewhere else."

And go they will. In April, Bring Philip are shooting through to Berlin — home at one time or another to many ex-pat Australians with Artistic Aspirations, a German dictionary, and a will to succeed. Until then, the now more compact Bring Philip will be playing sporadically — in Sydney only — test-driving their new European model.

"Berlin will be the base for the band," says Simon. "The economy there is such that we will be able to get by on a smaller amount than we would, say, in London. We also speak German, so that's a head start."

Ilmar says the band are "pretty confident. We haven't made big plans, and we don't expect them to have 'welcome' banners out, but I'm pretty confident we'll get gigs... and recognition and inspiration from being there. It should be great."

VIRGINIA MONCRIEFF

THE DEADLY HUME City To City

(pic: Michael Courtney)

DO YOU hate fast cars? Do you fear the open road? Do you wake in a cold sweat, fighting off visions of your Fiat 500 speeding head-on into a shiny Esso petrol tanker? And if you do, would you go as far as forming a band and singing songs to let people know about it?

Of course not; and neither, believe it or not, would the members of the Deadly Hume. They may take their name from one of their songs, but they know a fear of highways alone would be a pretty lousy premise for a rock'n'roll band.

In fact, for four musicians as competent as these to focus their energy on a Billy Graham-like campaign against the D.M.R. would be a downright waste of time.

"I don't like the Hume Highway at all, but that's not the reason we formed this band — in spite of what you may hear," says singer Greg Perano. "It's just that when we were ready to play we still didn't have a name, and our guitarist Bones suggested we use the name of one of our songs, *The Deadly Hume*."

After riding to fame on the lid of a garbage can (Greg played junk percussion with Hunters And Collectors), then spending last year drumming with the Love Rodeo, Greg wanted to sing. From the Love Rodeo he took bassist Mark Scully, who with drummer Stuart Brown now forms one of the strongest rhythm sections in Sydney. They play with crystal understanding — tight and fast, then slow and easy — laying the right base for Bones and Greg to build each song.

"The main thing the Hume is trying to do is create different moods with different songs," Greg says. "That mood is sometimes melancholy, but other times it's light-hearted. We have a song called *The Only Way I'll Drown My Sorrows Is If I Drown You*. It sounds pretty black, but there's humour in that too. I hope the people who see us can understand that."

Greg admires the mood and feel of the first two Suicide albums and the worldly narrative style of Tom Waits. But Suicide used some of the crudest electronic instruments ever recorded, and Tom Waits' whole approach is homemade, at best. So the Deadly Hume, with its standard rock lineup of guitar, bass and drums, aims to capture those elements with a variety of song themes.

They have two things in their favour here. Firstly, they can look at city life from a fresh angle, since three of them grew up in towns where the nearest cities were always a mystery. Bones is from Wollongong, Stuart from Newcastle, and Greg from Picton, New Zealand. So if longterm city dwellers find their song *Big Smoke* abstract or naive, they should at least be aware that it is informed by a very real smalltown mentality.

The Hume's second advantage is Catholic education. No, they don't get drunk on the pope's blood or any of that funny business. A Catholic education, says Greg, develops a vivid imagination in young children.

"At school we had to use our imagination, because we had no real evidence for what we were being taught about our religion, and that helps us now because imagination is so important in songwriting."

As for the song *The Deadly Hume*, Greg tells an ironic story. The song was written months ago, but it almost became a horrific reality on the band's recent tour to Queensland... Greg was riding in a mini-bus with the Twist Family Serious — the other band on tour. It was about four o'clock on a Saturday morning, and they were driving over a winding mountain road about 100km north of Newcastle, where they'd played the first show of the tour. The rain was driving down, restricting vision to only a few metres, but the bus was speeding, trying to make Byron Bay for the next night's show. After tailing a slow semi-trailer for several kilometres, the driver tried overtaking.

"The bastard in front didn't have his high beams on, so we couldn't see there was another semi coming straight at us. We nearly killed ourselves. It's spooky because that was so close to what happens in the song."

And how ironic, if the wrong highway had claimed the Deadly Hume...

DAVID BREARLEY

THE STEMS

(pic: Phil Blenkinsop)

Green Thumbs, Iron Fists & Velvet Gloves

"We believe in what we do," asserts the Stems' singer/guitarist Dominic Mariani in answer to critics with cloth ears and paisley eyeshades. J.J. ADAMS needs no convincing — nor should you.

IN EARLY 1985, shortly after Perth band the Stems arrived in Sydney for their first tour of the Big Smoke, I met guitarist/keyboardist Richard Lane at the home of a mutual friend. He didn't look very happy — certainly nothing like the cheery young man I'd seen grinning across stages to all and sundry.

"I've just played the best show of my life," he scowled. "The venue (Sydney Trade Union Club) was great, the audience really were getting going with us, everyone was powering."

Then the punchline: "This jerk came up to us backstage and told us we were great, but that we should wear more paisley!"

What's a band to do in a world where musical credibility is measured in terms of fashion, and careers are made and lost on the cut of a jacket?

"We just don't think about it," says singer/guitarist Dominic Mariani. "We're confident in what we do, and we don't hold back — we go for it. There's too many people around who worry about *NME* fashions and cynicism."

Mariani is generally a man of few words, reflecting the whole band's reserved offstage manner. When he speaks, he doesn't muck around — another mannerism seemingly common to many westerners who shoot from the hip when challenged.

Now, with two Sydney tours and two successful independent singles behind them, the Stems have once again ventured across sunsets and time zones to prove they can hold their own with the best of the east coast. They're carrying a new drummer — Dave Shaw, who replaced the "blonde Keith Moon", Gary Chambers (the only drummer I've ever seen who headbangs while he plays) — along with a new EP (about to arrive in the record stores any day) and a new air of confidence.

They're going to need all three because, as Joni Mitchell once described the politics of rock'n'roll, "First you're the up-and-coming prince, then you're the reigning king, then you're ripe for assassination."

From the moment the Stems decided to send a tape of their songs to Citadel Records boss John Needham, they've scarcely had time to look back. The tape became a single, *Make You Mine/She's A Monster*, which in turn became a hit on the independent charts.

At this point I was still making the then-common slip of calling the Stems by that classic 60s appellation, the Seeds, and no amount of persuasion could induce me to see them in the flesh — until their second last Sydney show. I'd had paisley till it was running out my ears, and if anyone mentioned the words "60s sound" or "psychedelic", I was ready to punch a peace sign down their throat.

But when I eventually overcame my cynicism, donned my 80s clothes and encountered the Stems onstage, I discovered that despite the bowl haircuts and Beatle boots, the Stems have roots in *three* decades of rock'n'roll — not just one. And if we're talking 60s, let's get it straight: it's mid-60s Yardbirds and Them, not late 60s Pink Floyd and Cream.

Sure it's pop, but it's power pop. Listen to some Vanilla Fudge and you might get the idea. Perth bands are often derivative, occasionally dull, but rarely wimpy — the Perth punk scene worshipped the New York bands rather than the London crowd and the obsession with New York Dolls grunge shows through in attitude ("don't label us") and style ("we don't hold back").

By the time the second single, *Tears Me In Two/Power Of Love* hit the shelves in late 1985, this iron fist within a velvet (underground) glove was beginning to show. Production from the Younger/Thorne team had ensured a more confident sound than the rather frail feel of the debut single, and a bright, primary cover screamed out for attention in the stores. It was a progression and a change, both of which dicta the band are determined to follow...

"We want to put out new records rather than lock ourselves into a limited sphere of sounds," says Mariani.

"The two singles represent two stages of the band," adds keyboardist/guitarist/vocalist Richard Lane. "They represent what we wanted to do at the time, and the upcoming EP is another separate statement, with two slower numbers to vary the feeling."

Naturally the east coast success of the band — "We were very surprised at getting such a good reaction, we had no idea that our music would go over that well" — has not gone unnoticed back in the Swan River city. According to Mariani, the Stems' initial success in their hometown was due to circumstance as much as design.

"The Perth punk era of the late 70s was a great time, but then the scene went dead for about three years," says Mariani. "Everything was synthesised and serious. It's only been in the past two years that rock'n'roll bands, *guitar* bands, have been able to play regularly again. When we started playing, we played once a week and a crowd began to grow before we knew it. I think that people were sick of dance clubs and wanted to hear some non-techno rock and roll again."

In two short years, the Stems' ready acceptance by an energy-hungry market has already seen the knives drawn. There's a couple of Perth expatriates around Sydney who've been loudly proclaiming how they knew the Stems "before they sold out", and more than a few industry people have been muttering that "the band has been too spoilt, they haven't had to struggle".

It's the old garrett ethos: the best artists are the starving ones (and the starving ones are also the most exploitable). And the Stems aren't buying any of it — nor the curious criticism that they are "too nice, too soft" (is sour grapes the flavour of the month?).

"Sure, we're copping flak," admits Mariani. "It seems it's just part of becoming popular. You draw twice as many people and cop twice as much flak.

"But then again, Perth has always been very faddish... people spend too much time reading the music fashion magazines. Everyone on the east coast thinks that bands like the Victims, the Manikins and the original Scientists had a huge following in Perth during their heyday, but they weren't that big. It often seems that people there learn to appreciate local bands only through the reaction of east coast audiences."

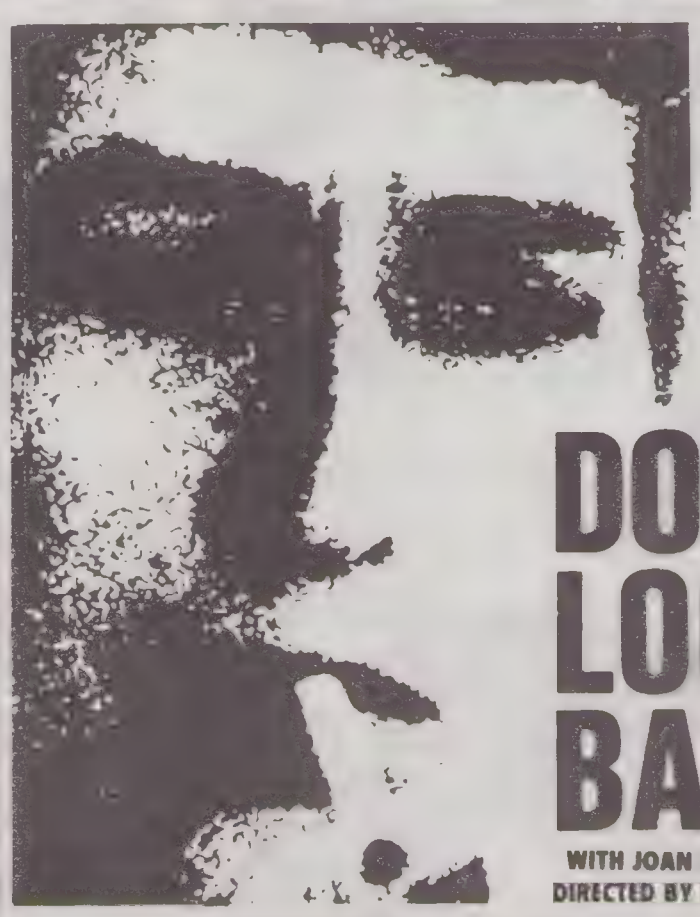
SATURDAY night in a Sydney beer barn, and the natives are restless. Any half-baked anthropology student would spot the tribes beginning to assert themselves: the males a mixture of drunken bravado and edgy curiosity, the females simultaneously self-conscious and flirtatious. They're not too sure what to make of this band — it's obvious the Stems aren't into macho posing, but they're not party to the hairdresser set either.

Bassist Julian Matthews, all youthfulness and unruly fringe, nervously cracks the odd joke ("We hear there's a lot of people who surf around here. We don't surf, but we think you'll like us anyway"), and the band suddenly jumps into the gutsy *Make You Mine* by way of getting feet on the floor and away from the bar. Numbers from the forthcoming EP (due out early March) follow... *Love Will Grow, Just Ain't Enough, Jumping To Conclusions* and *Under Your Mushroom*. They lace the originals with the odd cover (the Stones' *Fortune Teller*, the Choir's version of *It's Cold Outside*) and the crowd breaks into that curious and meaningful tribal ritual known as dancing.

If big-scale success happens to the Stems, chances are they'll be merely pleased rather than surprised.

"We believe in what we do," says Mariani. "I think that we write really good pop songs. We make up our own minds about things, and we hope that audiences will do the same towards us."

DYLAN



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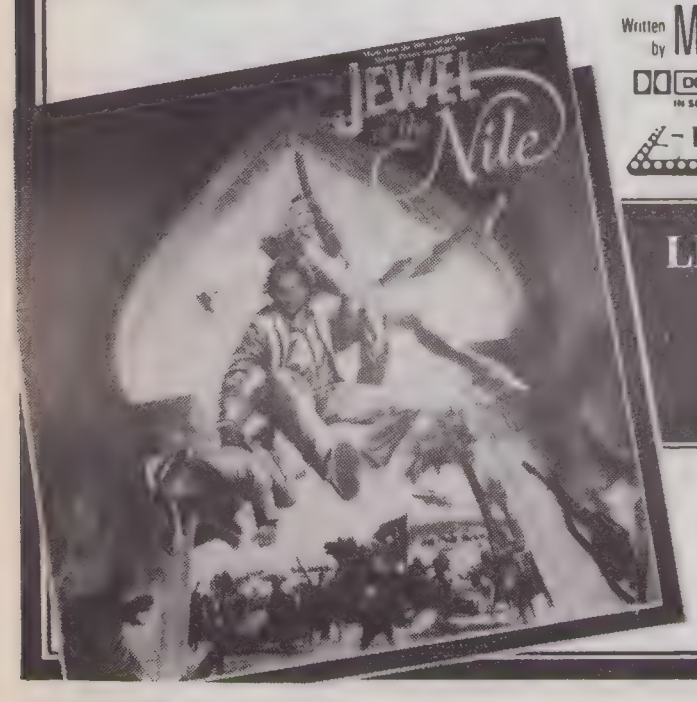

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FINE YOUNG CANNIBALS

Kicking Over The Corpses

FINE YOUNG CANNIBALS are dining out on success. Over pasta, they make a meal of the opposition. TED MICO dodges the vinaigrette, and decides they're not just fine — they're *good*.

THE ONLY difference between the rich and famous and you and me is that they are better known and have more money. There's a thought.

The difference between the Fine Young Cannibals and the rich and famous is only a matter of time. There's a fact. In no time at all they will ascend the ladder of recognition — from an X on the dole card to X Directory — from UB40 to "that'll do nicely sir". And why? Why?!

Because the Fine Young Cannibals are good. A perfect band for the 80s. Three haircuts with not a follicle out of place. The crops are ready for harvesting with stylish yet anonymous clothes, sophisticated yet elementary tunes, and stirring yet sterling backbeats. The Fine Young Cannibals are the bright young things of 1986. They are good. Front covers, rave reviews, and bottoms up.

This despite having two older statesmen: Andy Cox and David Steel were formerly two vertebrae at the very backbone of the Beat. Old dogs, but new tricks. Every one has its day. That's today.

Roland Gift, the young chiselled cheekbones of the band, knows why they will be successful. His half-camp, half-caravan voice rarely falters, and never musters surprise. The band stand out from the throng with "... good songs, good singing, good playing, good lyrics..."

Good can be grating. Greatness comes to those who think *great* without fear. FYC are not original like the Art Of Noise. Not outrageous like Sigue Sigue Sputnik. Not abrasive like the Fall. Not obnoxious like Dexy's. The facts are simple. They are good. And good is wholesome. Good sells. Good can even make you famous. There's a thought. A thought with which Andy doesn't concur.

"We don't want to be famous. It's more a by-product of what we really want to do." The monotony of Andy's Brummy tone is exaggerated by the frantic wailing of Italian waiters around the table.

"It's like the shit you get when you eat," he continues. "It comes out but it's not the reason you eat. I don't think we'll ever be as famous as Madonna or Prince. *They're* famous."

And so are the trio. The problem with the synthetic small-screen fame of the 80s is that there are just too many luminaries around. TV has allowed half of Christendom a stab at their 15 minutes. No one shines. There are too few consumers for too many names with too many faces.

Roland's face is already recognised most everywhere he roams. But he hasn't really thought through what fame means, which means he is not sure how to discern fortune from misfortune, which means that delivery is mistaken for deliverance, which means that the face that now fits every carbon-copy glossy rag may one day have to face the music. Fame is an opiate for the insecure of meagre mind, or the unwanted bale of the great mind. Mind your step. It's just a thought.

The Cannibals' debut single, *Johnny* has just slid into the Top 5 in Germany, Italy, Holland and Finland. Finland? Three faces grin back.

"There's this bloke in Finland who's been Number One for years," David explains. "He's the only famous Finn, so he's everywhere. He's on telly about three times a day."

Unlike the famous Finn, Roland is somewhat embarrassed by all the media attention. He keeps the autograph hunters and bounty hunters happy, even replying to fan letters from Helsinki, but shifts uneasily in his chair when he ponders the idea. It was just a thought. The band have had to repel the usual record company pressure for product, for more touring, for more exposure, in an attempt to transform limelight into arclight. The Fine Young Cannibals are good at saying "No".

David and Andy are, however, considering moving to London — the epicentre of the Cannibals earthquake. They have spent half this year on a motorway between London and their home in Handsworth, Birmingham (or what's left of it). David's enthusiastic about the move — it means he won't have to wait six months for movies to be screened: "There's not really a lot else to miss about the place."

Andy will miss it. He likes the community. He doesn't much care for the riots. The Cannibals are pacifists. That's the price of fame. With inflation, the cost can run even higher — like being sprayed by a water cannon at three o'clock on a freezing morning whilst shooting a video for *Blue*.

Roland tells me it's all part of the creative process. A very *damp* process. David says that the video didn't turn out how they had envisaged. Andy says nothing. He's concentrating instead on not desecrating the restaurant walls with spaghetti. His aim is true.

The Cannibals' aim was to produce a video similar to the Brylcreem ad. The result looks slick... but more like an ad for hairspray.

"It wasn't even supposed to look like a normal video," David says, sharpening his incisors. "The producers completely missed the point, but videos are out of the band's control. That's why we prefer to make records."

Their album more than compensates for their visual disappointment. The album is good. Good is nourishing. David takes another bite out of his avocado and tries to explain why bands are conscious of chart success when the best they can possibly hope for is to replace Jennifer Rush.

"I'm not sure about Number One. Everybody wants to be Top 10. It's all bullshit what bands say about not caring."

Good Lord.

ROLAND: "You make a record to give as many people a chance to listen to it as possible. If it's a good record that's even better."

The new single, *Blue*, is a good song. It is also the least *single* single on the album. It was the only song they had at the time. A song in the hand is worth one in the eye, eh Roland?

"People nowadays just make records instead of making songs," he replies.

David polishes his badge of Lenin with pride. His chin has no plans to grow a Bolshevik beard, though he feels shaving one off may be the closest thing to heaven. Help us.

The waiter wants us to order more food. The band consent with alacrity. The Fine Young Cannibals are good at saying "Yes".

. Roland is even a good person. He doesn't smoke, doesn't eat meat, doesn't partake of poisons, and doesn't drink... much, and when he does he becomes a different person, a monster, so it isn't him that's drinking. Logic isn't the band's greatest strength. Goodness is. Goodness leads to richness. Roland's voice has both.

Comparisons rain down on the table as names are dropped like anchors: a voice like Otis Redding, Desmond Dekker, Al Green, Sam Cooke. Take your pick and sail away. It's a voice to scorch the hairs of any cynic's nostril. A plaintive soul that clears the sinuses. Sniff. It almost makes you weep.

HALFWAY through the main course, and the trio still haven't gathered the faintest hint of desire in their voices. Passion is not a prerequisite with parmesan, but it's curious that a band can create such passion on plastic, yet converse with such flattened tones.

The Fine Young Cannibals are the perfect band for the 80s. Flick a switch and emotions run riot. Switch off and they become as immobile as frozen lasagna. Today the switch is wedged in the lifeless. So have the FYC found a means of allowing socialism to strut with style without tripping over one another?

ROLAND: "You should never be political at the expense of the song. But a song must always *say* something. There's nothing worse than the vacuous shit you get on the radio these days."

With each mouthful, Roland becomes more acerbic. Must be the vinaigrette. "I get more enjoyment out of listening to Ken Livingstone than bands like the Clash!"

Andy says nothing. He listens intently, and eats more intently. Mentioning the Beat as an example of another band who managed to accrete irreconcilables merely brings David to the point of premature indigestion. It was just a thought.

"I can't tell you about the split. It all sounds too bad in print. It was just hell. The last time I saw Dave Wakeling was at the last Beat gig. I never want to see him again."

He leans over the table shovelling in anything on his plate to avoid more questions. Suddenly a leap for mankind — an answer to the world's political crisis looms on the horizon inside David's cranium: "The only thing that can save us now is for Canada to invade America."

Sorry?

"The Americans would never expect *that*. Then Canada could take over Russia as well."

A stunning deduction followed by silence. Finally Roland fractures the sound of mastication with another jolt from the blue: "There is just a chronic lack of taste around at the moment."

Words fall on my plate. What defines good taste, Roland?

"Anyone who agrees with us!"

And a great many people do. All praise goes to a band who have no competition in the present. Theirs lies in the ashened past. The Memphis 60s. Those gory glory days.

FYC "hate other bands", according to Dave. Andy says "Ummm" to thunderous applause. Roland would like to meet Otis Redding to discuss singing techniques: "There are a couple of places where I think he went a bit wrong, and I could put him right." Sadly, Otis doesn't speak too much anymore.

"You shouldn't listen to what he (*Roland*) says. Don't believe it," interrupts David. "We change our minds too often. Tomorrow we may reverse everything we've said today."

The band are atrocious liars. They are, however, a *good* band. All is good for the good of all. The bill arrives, and I depart.

Good luck.

KNOCKIN' ON DYLAN'S DOOR

Ross Barnett

"Climbing Mt Everest is easier than interviewing BOB DYLAN" — just the sort of talk that's guaranteed to spur the intrepid reporter in search of an exclusive. Unlike Mohammed, STUART COUPE goes to the mountain. Why? Because it was there...

"IF Hank Williams was sitting here now, what would you ask him?" I said to Bob Dylan, who has listed Williams as one of the people he'd most like to have interviewed.

"I'd probably ask him where he gets his drugs," Dylan replied, laughing for the only time in our half-hour interview.

"What else would I ask him? I think that would be enough. I always liked his clothes, and I probably would have wanted to know where he got those."

Dylan was sitting in the downstairs bar at Auckland's *tres* expensive Regent Hotel after his second Australasian concert, a magnificent outdoor performance in front of nearly 40,000 people thankfully free of the sound problems that were to plague subsequent Entertainment Centre concerts in Sydney.

Dylan seemed relaxed and in a playful mood; probably sensing an extremely nervous journalist sitting opposite him, he threw on one of his masks and prepared for another verbal sparring match.

Interviewing Bob Dylan — even in 1986 — is something different to your ordinary run-of-the-mill pop star encounter. Questioning the likes of Bruce Springsteen, Sting, Johnny Rotten/Lydon, Boy George or this week's here-today-gone-tomorrow pop sensation rarely inspires the awe and, let's face it, downright trepidation that accompanies an audience with the most influential song and sage man of the last quarter-century. Then again, there's not too many people who get to feel that fear. Bob Dylan doesn't often give interviews. Why should he?

Lincoln Hall, one of the three Australians who climbed Mt Everest, wanted to interview Dylan whilst he was in Australia for this third concert tour. Through Dylan's Australian publicist, Patti Mostyn, Hall sent a copy of the book he'd written about the Everest adventure to Dylan's manager, Elliot Roberts, hoping that its contents might encourage Mr Zimmerman to talk to him. The answer was a definite no.

"Tell him that climbing Mt Everest is easier than getting an interview with Bob Dylan," Roberts replied.

Hall missed out on an audience with Dylan. Lauren Bacall got one after the second Sydney concert, the two reportedly chatting for hours. Greg Matthews, the closest Australian cricket has to a pop star at present, missed out — but did get to sign a few autographs backstage for the Australian promoters.

Besides last week's press conference at Brett Whitely's Surry Hills gallery, Dylan had only consented to one other interview; conducted in Los Angeles with *60 Minutes*, the resulting confrontation was described by reporter George Negus as something akin to having teeth pulled. Still, it didn't cost *60 Minutes* $250,000...

Dylan has rarely been an easy interview subject. As a rule he doesn't give many, although in the last year — with the release of his current album, *Empire Burlesque* and the delightful retrospective, *Biograph* — Dylan has entered one of the most verbose periods of his career, with a number of America's major music-oriented publications being granted lengthy interviews.

Yet in Australia, the 44-year-old Dylan's response to questions was closer to the clever, evasive, confident youth oracle of the mid-sixties who had reporters tearing their hair out in futile attempts to induce him to answer questions in terms they understood.

Twenty years later however, Dylan is not quiet so sharp or verbally quick. Just like his records of the last decade, he doesn't have the same panache that made albums like *Highway 61 Revisited* and *Blonde On Blonde* such landmarks.

'You've got a lotta nerve'

Perhaps the most telling (and blatantly honest) answer Dylan gave at his Sydney press conference was when Brett Whitely asked him how much of his music was pulled up from his subconscious...

"It gets less and less that's pulled up from my subconscious," Dylan replied. "I used to pull a lot of it out. I pull some of it out once in a while, but not too often."

In 1986, Dylan appears as someone who's been asked — and has answered — every conceivable question, and is totally reluctant to respond expansively to any approach that doesn't interest him. Onstage he appears as a man who's still trying to find the perfect context for presenting his songs, experimenting this time with a style that's closest to a good old-fashioned rough and ragged bar-room stomp. There's something vaguely disconcerting about someone in Dylan's position who still appears so uneasy in live performance, and is still doing things that he obviously doesn't want, or *need* to do.

Dylan's reluctant consent to interviews, press conferences and videos seems to be at the sole discretion of manager Elliot Roberts, a heavyweight of the American music industry whose other clients include Tom Petty, Neil Young and the Cars.

The Sydney press conference was a typical encounter — Dylan didn't want to be there, and the media were hardly showered with brilliant insights.

Q: Why did you decide to tour Australian with Tom Petty?
A: "Because of the money."
Q: What is the difference between the Bob Dylan of the sixties and the Dylan of today?
A: "Not much, because I still do most of the same material."
Q: In the sixties, your songs were described as 'anthems for a generation'; do you still feel a responsibility in that direction?
A: "No."
Q: Do you think you've passed the apex of your career?
A: "What career? I've never had a career. I'm someone who doesn't work for a living."

MAYBE you could put it down to the Australian media's notorious reputation for asking dumb questions, but after my encounter I'm of the opinion that Dylan's *told* when he should do an interview; and no matter what the standard of the questions, Bob Dylan talks about what he wants, *when* he wants — and nothing, except perhaps a telex from God is going to get him to change that.

My Dylan interview had a sense of 'event' from the start. 'No press' had been the position until after the Wednesday night's concert in Wellington, when Frontier Touring Company prime mover Michael Gudinski informed me that yes, Dylan would probably do one interview, most likely after the Auckland concert or on the plane to Sydney — but the placement of the interview was to be delayed. It's rumoured that Frontier had paid Dylan up front for six Sydney concerts and were having trouble selling five, so a widely circulated Dylan interview was deemed necessary to sell the remaining seats — and Dylan was certainly not talking to radio or TV.

After the Auckland concert, I drove back to the Regent Hotel with the entourage and waited in Gudinski's room. After half an hour, Roberts called to say that Bob "wanted a bath". Three-quarters of an hour on, Bob was clean, relaxed and wanted to call America — supposedly to speak to his children.

A half hour later, I was told that Robert Zimmerman would see me in the downstairs bar — but that the interview "may or may not" happen. "Talk to him for a few minutes and see how you get on," Gudinski said.

'There must be some kinda way outa here'

I'm introduced to a slightly pudgy Dylan who proffers a rather weak handshake, his manager suggesting we retire to a table where he remains for the duration of the conversation, assuming alongside the presence of Dylan an equally intimidatory role — wincing at questions he obviously doesn't find suitable, and helping Bob out with responses to others.

I started badly, suggesting to Dylan that his association with the classic American rock'n'roll band the Heartbreakers was good for him, bringing out performances full of fire and spirit — the likes of which he hadn't given for a long time.

"Since when?" Dylan taunted. "Come on, tell me when I last gave good shows; you tell *me* when I last gave spirited shows."

The last truly great rock'n'roll shows I can recall hearing on record from Dylan were back in 1974 on his triumphant American tour with the Band, and this prompts Dylan to discourse about how much he enjoys playing with the Heartbreakers and what a good rock'n'roll band they are — something Tom Petty had concurred with earlier that day...

"He's told me that this is probably the happiest he's ever been with a group because it *is* a group, and it's like Bob's just talking to one guy... and I think we just have a sympathetic musical style," Petty said. "But I do think he's kind of in a rock'n'roll mood right now."

Dylan's two New Zealand concerts were certainly real rock'n'roll shows. He may have started loosely, but as the performances went on the playing became more inspired, Dylan singing with a stronger voice than anyone expected.

The repertoire drew from all periods of Dylan's career — it's a testament to his ability that he can sing *Blowin' In The Wind* two decades after it was recorded and still make it interesting, relevant and moving in 1986. Dylan also performed classics such as *Like A Rolling Stone, Positively 4th Street, Knocking On Heaven's Door, Just Like A Woman, It's Alright Ma (I'm Only Bleeding), Ballad Of A Thin Man,* and *Rainy Day Women*.

There were also numerous selections from recent albums, including Dylan's current single, *When The Night Comes Falling* which received an inspired treatment — due largely to the presence of four black backup vocalists who were particularly prominent on the gospel-orientated songs.

By the time Dylan and his 47-person circus reached Sydney, the shows should have been sizzling. Yet the first concerts were painful to listen to, thanks to an appalling sound mix. As the week progressed, the sound improved; Mark Knopfler got up and played a few solos, and a night later Stevie Nicks joined Dylan and Petty for *Knockin' On Heaven's Door*, later describing the five minutes as "one of the greatest experiences of my life."

One thing the current version of Bob Dylan *isn't* is the angry, politically astute figure who wrote songs that became anthems for any number of organisations and movements espousing a variety of causes. When I asked Dylan about his politics, he stared back at me from behind his dark sunglasses...

"Well, I never had any politics — I'm still searching for some," he said. "Maybe one of these days I'll run into some that make sense to me, but at the moment I don't even know what politics are, to tell you the truth."

Whilst thinking to myself that this was a load of evasive garbage, I suggest that if nothing else Dylan's association with Live Aid and the Farm Aid Benefit indicated he was taking a stance on certain political issues.

"It might be," he said with a wry smile. "I don't know what politics it would be, other than everybody is affected by the farm crisis so it transcends politics, I think. You see, I'm not into politics. I'll tell you why I'm not into politics. Because when you're voting for somebody, you trust the guy. Anything he wants to do, if you trust him it doesn't matter what he does, because you're going to agree with what he does anyway.

"But the people who run in politics, they run on issues — what they would just do on certain issues, so you don't ever have a chance to know the man, you know what I mean? If you meet someone that you think is OK, you'll go all the way with that person; right or wrong, you're going to go all the way, but if he's just talking about what he's going to do to keep the bar open till after 2 o'clock or whatever, that's just an issue. The guy could be a real dog and say he'll do all these things for you."

Dylan said that the problems currently facing farmers in America are the result of "the system, where corporations grow the food.

"Farmers have gotten to be businessmen. You see, they've turned farmers into businessmen. But when you're talking about food, you're not talking about shoes or appliances or automobiles — you're talking about something that people need to survive.

"I don't really know if it's a real crisis yet. I know the supermarkets still got their shelves pretty much stocked. It's more a crisis of who's got the money to buy the food."

Returning to the 1974 tour with the Band, I reminded Dylan of something *Rolling Stone* critic Greil Marcus had written where he'd suggested that the concerts then showed that all Dylan wanted to be was like Elvis Presley — an aging, cabaret-styled performer crooning out predictable versions of his hits to adoring and unquestioning audiences.

'Most likely you go your way and I'll go mine'

"Well, that's kind of funny, because Greil... what's his name, never asked me about that," Dylan said. "You know what happened to Elvis... he's dead, and I don't want to be like that at all. No, I never wanted to be like Elvis."

Dylan did admit to listening to a lot of Elvis when he was younger, and at the press conference said that one of the highlights of his career was when Presley recorded one of his songs. I asked him about other versions of his songs that he'd found exciting or exceptional...

"I thought Diana Ross did a nice version of *Forever Young*," Dylan said. But was he serious? Subsequent attempts to trace that version have failed...

"That group from Nashville, Jason & the Scorchers, did kind of an interesting version of a song of mine from one of their albums back."

Most praise was reserved for Jimi Hendrix's version of *All Along The Watchtower*, and Dylan claimed he hadn't heard the bootlegged version of Bruce Springsteen singing *I Want You*, and wasn't going to be drawn into making observations about Springsteen.

Dylan was reluctant to talk about his other activities in Australia, and wouldn't give details of the recording he was doing in Sydney between concerts. Soon after arriving, Dylan, Petty, the Heartbreakers, Stevie Nicks and Dylan's four back-up singers went into Festival Records' studio and with Petty producing, recorded a new song of Dylan's (reportedly finished at the Sebel Town House). It's called *Band Of The Hand*, the theme song for an unspecified movie.

There's also a film being made of the tour. The fifth and sixth Sydney concerts are to be recorded and filmed by Gillian Armstrong, of *My Brilliant Career* and *Starstruck* fame.

"That'll be for a film for national television in the States, and probably other parts of the world," Dylan said, less than enthusiastically. "I picked Gillian because she was really excited about the project, and she's a competent filmmaker."

Surely she was selected for stronger reasons than that, there being dozens of 'competent' filmmakers in the world?

"I wouldn't exactly say there's dozens," Dylan muttered.

According to the Zim, the film may or may not be shot in black and white and it may or may not include footage shot at locations other than the Sydney Entertainment Centre. In fact, for someone who traditionally likes to maintain tight control over what is released under his name, Dylan was remarkably unconcerned about the format of the film.

"We're playing the live shows and we're on a tour, and it's too much to be travelling around and be involved in making a film," Dylan said.

IN a great interview with *Spin* magazine earlier this year, Dylan gave a list of people from history he'd most like to have interviewed. They included Hank Williams, Apollinaire, Joseph (from the Bible), Marilyn Monroe, John F. Kennedy, Mohammed and Paul the Apostle.

I told Dylan about attending a forum in New York at a New Music Seminar, where Lou Reed stood up and said he'd gotten chills down his spine because he'd just shook the hand of someone he admired — James Brown. Dylan's response to being asked if there was anyone in the world who would have that effect on him was not only flippant, but revealing as to his concerns these days...

"Well, there's a guy sitting over at the table over there who I'd really like to meet," Dylan said. "His name's Marty Feldman — he's my accountant. Yeah, I think I'd find it pretty exciting shakin' his hand."

Dylan relaxes more when reminiscing about some of the writers, poets and artists he knew, or who'd influenced him in the late fifties and early sixties. He expressed admiration for the poet Frank O'Hara, who, along with Gary Snyder and Phillip Whalen, was an early influence. Dylan has recorded an album of William Blake's poetry with Allen Ginsberg, and Ginsberg accompanied him on the *Rolling Thunder Review*, as well as cropping up fleetingly in the *Don't Look Back* movie.

"I knew Allen in '61 when he got back from India, and I've known him on and off over the years and I see him occasionally," Dylan said. "The last time I saw him was last year. He's just had a *Collected Works* published, a very large volume of stuff."

Dylan never met Jack Kerouac, but recalled watching him recite his work with a jazz band at the Village Vanguard. According to Bob, Kerouac was backed by Charlie Mingus when in fact it was Zoot Sims and Al Cohn.

A surprise inclusion in the live set list has been Dylan's song about Lenny Bruce. As the song suggests, Dylan confirmed they did catch a cab together once...

"Yeah, I saw him perform in the early sixties, around 1963, before he got caught up in all that legal stuff," Dylan said. "He's someone who's never really been attributed the respect he deserves for what he did and the influence he had on so many people. Guys like Richard Pryor and Eddie Murphy, they owe such a huge debut to him but no-one makes the same fuss about him as they do about all those other guys that died before they shoulda."

I tell Dylan about the story of Phil Spector buying the negatives of the photos of Bruce lying dead on the floor, so that the newspapers didn't get hold of them. He didn't know the story, and his manager reckoned it was a bit macabre.

'How does it feel to be on your own?'

The Dylan who carried a suitcase full of books with him on his 1978 Australian tour now says he doesn't read much. He did, however, enjoy Pete Townshend's new book, *Horse's Neck*. "I don't read a whole lot. I go through periods when I may read. I may read some kind of stuff more than other stuff."

There are no plans for any further writing (other than more songs), and there will be no followup to his novel, *Tarantula*.

"That was just a chapter in my life, and there's only one chapter," Dylan said.

The day of the interview, I'd bought a copy of Irish writer Brendan Behan's reminiscences of New York. The preface was: "To America, my new-found land, the man that hates you, hates the human race." I asked Dylan if he concurred...

"That's kinda putting it a bit strongly," Dylan replied. "But it's hard not to love America — don't *you* love America?

"It's the kind of country where if you don't like where you're living or what you're doing, then you can always move on someplace else."

At this point, Mr Roberts tells me time's up and that he and Bob are going to have a drink. I stay seated at the table, figuring they'll go to the bar.

"And we're staying here," Elliot says leadingly.

"Does that mean you're telling me to get lost?" I ask.

"I wasn't going to put it quite like that," he riposts.

I think maybe I'll go climb Mt Everest...

THE MAN IN THE MIRROR

One-on-one with TOM PETTY, by STUART COUPE

(pic: Tony Mott)

"BEING on this tour is great," Tom Petty laughed. "Usually I have to worry about my health and my voice, but I can be a real delinquent on this tour."

Petty was reluctantly giving two more interviews, ostensibly to promote the 'Alone And Together' Tour he was on with the Heartbreakers and Bob Dylan. These were supposedly all the interviews he was going to do in Australia. A few days before, with equal reluctance, he'd talked to some New Zealand media.

Petty and the Heartbreakers last toured Australia in 1980, and on that tour Petty was far from talkative. Towards the end of the interview I asked Petty what he remembered of that visit.

"I remember being here and I remember thinking that it was a pretty place but it was at the end of ten months of touring, the 'Damn The Torpedoes' Tour, and I was just about ready to go home by the time I got there — so the trip's kinda foggy."

Since then Petty's released a couple more albums including the magnificent *Southern Accents*, arguably the best album he and the Heartbreakers have made.

With Dylan, he and the Heartbreakers have assumed very much the role of backing band. The only songs they've performed alone on the tour are *Straight Into Darkness*, *Refugee*, *American Girl* and two covers — the Animals' *Don't Bring Me Down* and the Byrds' *So You Want To Be A Rock'n'Roll Star*.

Besides his performances with Dylan, the main fare for the gossipmongers is just what has been going on between Petty and Stevie Nicks. She ain't saying anything, and Petty's response is the standard "We're just friends". Certainly the two frequently left the concerts in the same car, and at the Wellington show Nicks was rushing up the stairs during a break clutching a drink for Tommy. What do you make of that, Holmes?

Anyway, Petty and I started talking about *Southern Accents* and moved on to a variety of subjects: the Byrds, Farm Aid, his relationship with the Heartbreakers, the South, and the song that Petty would most like to be remembered for...

I guess you've been asked this a lot since *Southern Accents* was released, but can we talk about your upbringing? I understand you grew up in Florida, which isn't a place I normally think of as southern...

"Yeah, most people think it's Miami, but it's really a pretty big state. We're from the northern part which is pretty close to Georgia. It's a swampland where we're from — alligators and that kind of stuff, so it's very southern."

What is it about a southern upbringing that stands out? It seems to often have a similar effect to being brought up a Catholic...

"Well, I dunno if it makes you different. It's a distinct culture as far as the States goes. It's very hard to put it into a couple of sentences. It's just a different pace of life there. There's a lot of tradition there; I think the Civil War still lingers on there a little bit — the effects of it linger on somehow. I've found southern people to be very soulful people. I usually like southern musicians."

Did you hear a lot of the greats when you were growing up?

"Well, we did. We heard a lot of music then because of having Nashville, Memphis and New Orleans and all those stations at night come through, and we heard a lot of r'n'b music. I've lived in California a long time and people there didn't hear it as much. I think the first music I ever heard in my house was country music."

What sorts of people?

"Like Ernest Tubb, Porter Wagoner and that kind of stuff."

And that was all on the radio?

"Yeah, and TV... they had TV shows. It's funny, when you're a kid you think, 'Well, that's my parents' music,' but I really do love that music. We had a real mixture of rock'n'roll and r'n'b, and blues. All that stuff was played around. Even New Orleans jazz and stuff like that. And then of course in the 60s we got a lot of English groups who had a big effect, groups that you wouldn't think of us listening to down there, but we listened to quite a bit of psychedelic music in the south. I think that's probably the main advantage it had, musically."

How come the southern themes surfaced on *Accents*, because as far as I can tell it wasn't evident on your earlier records?

"Like I say, I'd been living in California for nearly ten years... more than that, maybe since '74, so I don't even think I would have written that album if I'd still lived in the south. It was the advantage of coming back and being able to look on both sides of the fence. It was the beginning of the tour in '83. We started off down there, so I was down there spending a lot of time and it just struck me as an idea. I didn't want to do another album of love songs at the time. Now I wouldn't really mind doing an album of love songs, but at the time I really wanted to stretch us a little bit and it just presented itself, so I really started writing it in '83 on the road. Then I decided that I didn't want to make it too strict a theme, or try to tell the whole story of the South or something, which some people thought I was trying to do. You'd need like 15 albums to do something like that. But I just thought I'd take these southern musical styles and just try to apply one to the tracks, and we've got some swampy stuff, and Stax stuff, all kinds of different things. The album that got left off was all sorts of things like bluegrass and honky tonk, but I think if I'd put them both out it would really have thrown a curve to the old consumer."

How did Robbie Robertson and the guys from the Band come to be involved on *Southern Accents*?

"That track (*The Best Of Everything*) is the oldest one on the album, one that I originally wrote for *Hard Promises* whenever that was... '81, maybe. And I'd written it, and we'd cut the track and it got left off because I thought we were a little ballad-heavy on that album, and it was just around. And this movie came along called *The King Of Comedy* and Robbie asked me could he have a song because he was doing the music for it. I played him this thing and he thought it was great, perfect, and he asked me what I'd think if he put some horns and things in there, and I told him to go for it, let's see what it does. Anyway, to make the story short, the record was finished and there was a dispute between the company that was putting out the movie and my record label."

That sounds like the story of your life!!

"It was like I hadn't given my record company a record in a long time, which I'm prone to do (*laughs*). It's just because sometimes I work for a long time. They were a little upset about another company having a new single so they wouldn't let me do it, so I asked Robbie to give it back to me and told him that I'd stick it on an album someday or something because I really loved it. So of all people, Nick Lowe, who I just love dearly, a great guy, was on this tour with me in '83 and one night I put it on and I was working on this southern album but I hadn't told Nick that, and I put this song on and old Nick just went wild, and kept playing it over and over and over, saying, 'Man, this is really *southern*,' and I went 'Oooooh yeah, perfect,' and it was then that I decided to put it on the album. That's kinda how the album started. I'd written *Rebels* and I had that, so I knew where I was going to start and where I was going to end."

Do you often, or ever, go back and play your old records?

"Do I? Not very often. I like to hear them on the radio. Lately, since CDs have come along, now and then we'll stick one on... Benmont (*Tench*) is always playing them and I've heard a few lately, and it's really amazed me how much you forget... but I hear them on the radio."

I was curious about your relationship with the Heartbreakers. Some people suggest that it's a very close, democratic relationship, whilst others see it as a case of you being the star and the band being very much second-class citizens. What's the story?

"We've been together for ten years with no changes, except for one in '81. I knew some of the Heartbreakers when we were in high school, and it's a very old bunch of guys as far as how long we've known each other. We've known each other an awfully long time and I don't think that attitude exists — as a matter of fact, they've all certainly come into their own over the last couple of years, they've all done things on their own that have been very successful. None of them *have* to do this (*laughs*). I think we stay together because the band's getting better. It's very unusual to have a band together for ten years, and it's getting better. You know, my name would never have been in the band, it never would have been Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers except for by the time they all got to LA I already had a record contract, so the only way to do it was to call it Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers. So in that respect there was probably some confusion, and maybe some slight resentment. But if you write the songs and sing them, you're always gonna get singled out.

"But I tell you, they're all good writers, they've all written hits. Benmont's got two hits right now. He's written this Feargal Sharkey song and he and I just had the Number One country song in the States with Rosanna Cash and a song called *Never Be You*. He wrote the song *Sunset Grill* with Don Henley, and Michael (*Campbell*) wrote *Boys Of Summer*. Even Stan (*Lynch*)'s written a song. I think Howie's probably going to make an album really soon. Howie (*Epstein*)'s the secret weapon really, the one to be discovered — he's a great singer and he can play anything with strings on it. That's going to be a real surprise to people when that comes out.

"I wouldn't mind to see them all start singing a little bit, because they can all sing. Well, Stan and Howie can sing, and I wouldn't mind at this point if they were a little more involved than what they already are."

Is it frustrating being on this tour and only doing four songs a night without Bob? And I was surprised that of those four there were two cover versions.

"Yeah, that was probably a little cheeky, but you see it doesn't bother me at all. I play those songs *all* the time (*laughs*), so I'm really content to sing *Blowin' In The Wind* or *Like A Rolling Stone* or these songs that I'm singing. I'm really quite content to do that."

Do you have any definite political leanings, especially in the light of playing Farm Aid and the content of *Southern Accents*?

"The farm thing was very important to me, it really is. They're going to be wiped out. I'm just into farmers. My grandparents were all farmers and I just thought it was very important. And we don't normally do benefits. We've done two or three, I think... ever. I think we did the *No Nukes* one round about '78 and that was alright, and I don't think we did one again till about Live Aid, and then Farm Aid."

What is the exact situation with Farm Aid?

"It's the government. It's like you only get paid... you've got to spend more to grow the stuff than you're going to get paid. These people are like the backbone of the family ethic. It's an important thing. If that disintegrates and the farmers go down it's going to ruin all that, it's not going to be there."

That seems to be a southern characteristic, a really strong sense of family.

"It has a very strong sense of family, maybe *too* strong. Forget the south, all of America is built on that. One out of five jobs in America is directly related to farming. If it goes under..."

The spate of country movies that came out last year — were they close to what's really happening?

"Yeah, very much. I think those are very accurate, yeah. It's very much like that, and pretty much tells the story."

How was the money distributed from Farm Aid?

"I don't really know. I think that's up to Willie. I get a newsletter every so often about it. I just trust someone real smart's gonna do that because I can't do that. I do know that they didn't want to go and just pay off their loans — they want to put money in their pockets. They want to make sure they get their medical bills paid, and put some food on the table."

Is it that bad?

"Oooooohhh, it's horrific. These people are gonna *starve*, literally, and they feed *us*. You and I don't want to go out and grow vegetables. I can't grow food, but if everybody stops doing it, it's going to be kinda strange, I think."

What's the planned solution, is it to pay more for the crops or what?

"What they really want to do is to get some sort of legislation to put some kind of ceiling on how far the government can go with this thing. It's a very vast subject, and I'm probably not educated enough to properly explain it. And more than just raising money, what the concerts did was make people aware of the problem because you can't raise enough money to get them out of the hole. The good thing about Live Aid was that it just made everybody aware of the fact that we can help each other. It was surprising to see that there was a sense of community at all in rock'n'roll, because it had pretty well vanished, and that was the nicest thing about the day."

What's the story with the Heartbreakers' live album? I had a sense that it was just hurled out with very little promotion, almost as if it was a contract filler.

"I wouldn't do that. I mean, have I ever done it before? Have I ever tried to keep product out? I didn't do anything for three years! I put it out because we made a movie called *Pack Up The Plantation* that's just now coming out in the States, and this was basically 90 percent of the soundtrack for the movie. When I was mixing the soundtrack to the movie I was thinking, 'This is really good,' and there's always been the fans wanting one and it's a good live group. It's really one of the better ones, and I just thought there should be something available, nothing more serious than that. I just wanted something available. It's really turning out to be quite a successful album, at least over there, and I never expected that."

What's the background to the film?

"It's just a concert. But it was like ten years together, and it just felt right to do it."

How's your hand?

"You can see the scar down the middle. It's fine, but it hurts sometimes if I play too long, and I can't lift much with it. It's never going to be normal, but it works."

You must have hit that wall mighty hard...

"Yeah. I broke all of these bones in half. I won't be doing *that* again. I had surgery on it, a six-hour operation and nine months of therapy. I didn't have my left hand for nine months... You don't want to hurt your hands."

Do you have plans for any more recording?

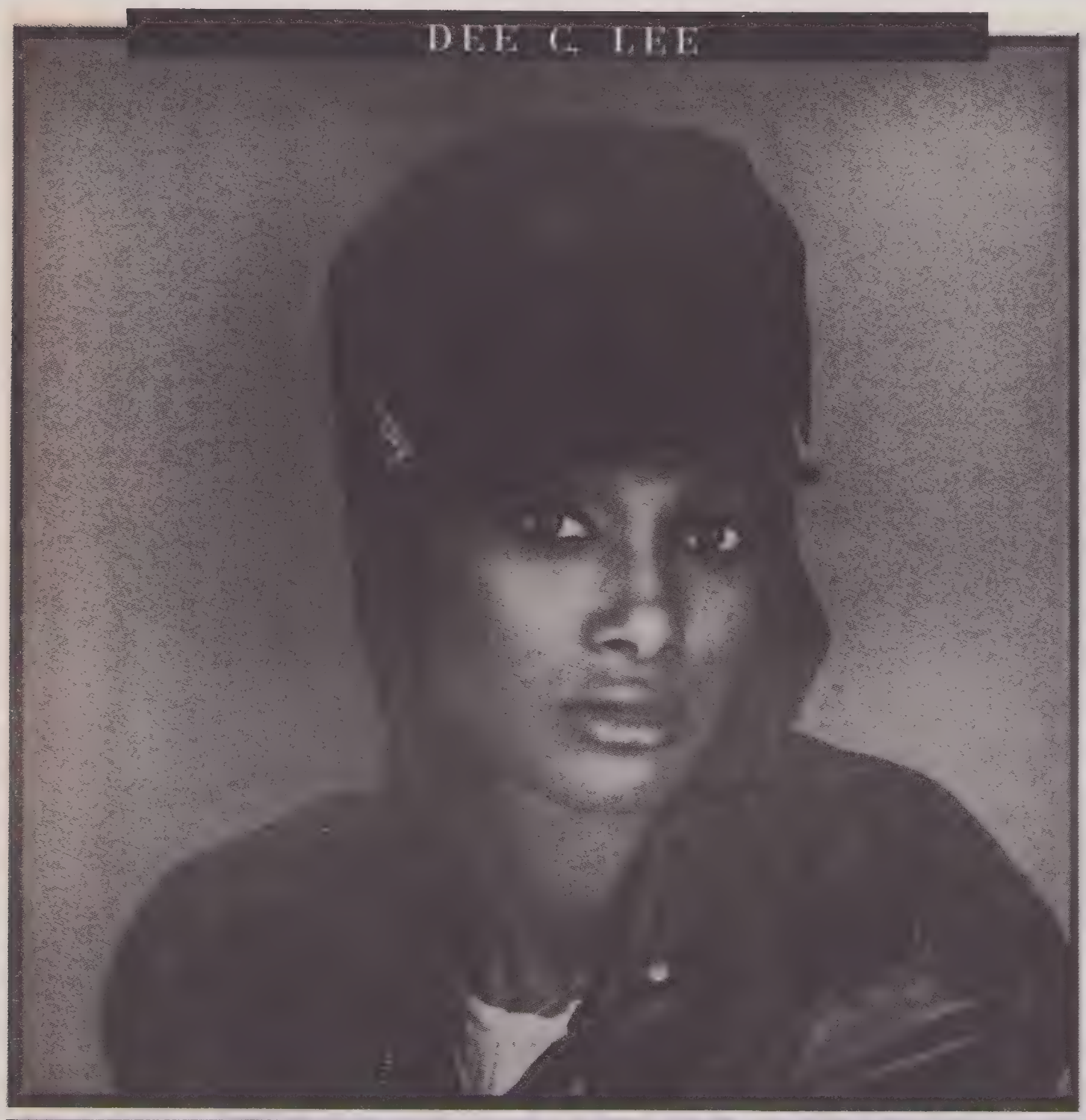
"Oh yeah. Well, I'm going to produce a record tomorrow for Bob, a single. I dunno if I should say that... I'm not going to say *where*. The Heartbreakers are writing a new album now. Mike Campbell's actually writing most of this one. It's going to be very good, but so far it's just very straightforward stuff, just guitars and drums."

Love songs?

"Love songs, yeah. No concepts. I'm kinda weary of concepts right now."

And if one Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers song could be kept in a time capsule and played to Martians as representative of the band, what song would you select?

"*Southern Accents* is my favourite song I've written."



"It took time for me to find my sense of direction — The Style Council have been invaluable, they've really boosted my confidence... after working with them and having this go at a solo career, I could *never* go back to normal session work."

Would she not be better off divorcing herself completely from the Solid Bond network if she wants to be seen as primarily a solo artist? The Style Council feature on the single's B-side, and it might cloud reactions to her if she's seen as another Weller protege. Dee replies with absolute good humour...

"The whole point is that we're all friends and friends help each other out," she says, smiling discreetly. "I want this single to do well, but I really don't think the Style Council would be responsible for it if it does. In fact the single *has* to do well," she laughs, gazing idly at the walls of the studio that are papered in Style Council press cuttings, pictures of Weller and Talbot, cartoons of Tracie and mementoes from the tours.

"Apart from the professional satisfaction, there's the whole practical side as well — I've got to pay the rent. To be honest, I'd much rather maintain a certain level or standard, all the time making *good* records rather than leap into the charts straight away and then burn out. Having worked with Wham! and the Style Council I've got a good idea of what I want, I've learned from them. I don't pretend to have it all mapped out, in fact," she grins. "I'm taking it to heart far less than I did before.

"That's what I mean about not aiming too much for the charts, because you get sucked into all the problems that go along with pop success."

Dee's keeping it cool for the moment, but you can tell from her enthusiasm that she has plans. "I'm still developing as a performer really; again, touring with the Style Council has really charged my confidence — I'll work with them as long as they want me. Going it alone is challenging but I'd never sacrifice the fun," she says, "and that loyalty is irreplacable."

(pic: LFI/SL)

From Backup To Frontline

Former Wham! 'fashion accessory' and current Style Council backup singer Diane 'Dee C.' Lee moves to centre-stage with the runaway success of her third solo single, *See The Day*. HELEN FITZGERALD sees the leading light...

IT can't have escaped your notice that in the last year or two, black female backing singers have become a very fashionable addition to a band's ensemble. This is great for session singers in that it brings them work, but Dee C. Lee considers it a drawback in the long run.

Her cynicism is based on personal experience — first as a fashion accessory for Wham!, and lately as second vocal fiddle to Paul Weller's Style Council.

"I see all these bands now with black backing singers; I mean, they're all doing it now, and it's like they're saying 'Look at me, I'm so street cred, we're a *soulful* band now'."

Actually, the Style Council were the first band she'd worked with who didn't want to stick her up the back where she'd have to fight to be heard over the drumkit...

"In most session situations, they just want you for harmonies in the background — going '*shooweeoobopbop*' — they don't want to talk to you or hear your opinion on what might sound better. I've got a fairly distinctive voice and they *hate* you to stand out at all, like you'll take away from them. The Style Council have never been like that, they treated me like a complete equal from the beginning — which is the whole reason I like working with them."

Dee hadn't even heard of the Jam when she first met Weller. "I wasn't into punk at *all*," she giggles, "so I didn't have any preconceptions, I just went into the studio to do a job." Only it wasn't like any other job, because for the first time she found herself incorporated into a team.

"I was expecting to be shoved into the background and told what to do. Instead they treated me as a complete equal and you've no *idea* what a novelty that was."

Of Weller's integrity Dee can't speak too highly...

"Paul speaks his mind, he's got very strong political views and good for him. When I first met him, he impressed me as someone honest, intelligent, and professional... since then I've learned that he's a very nice bloke as well. He and Mick are the greatest people to work with and I hope to be singing with them for as long as I can."

Dee's solo career is the one thing that could lure her away from them. Already she's released three UK singles, but her new one, *See The Day*, is a far more soulfully attractive song than the awkward pop constructions of *Selina Wow Wow*, *Yippee Yi Yay* ("I'd rather forget about that one, thank you very much") and *Don't Do It Baby*. She agrees.

"Yeah, I'm sort of considering *See The Day* as my first single really. I like *Selina Wow Wow*, but it wasn't right for me. The problem is that I'm a novice songwriter, and it's not one of my strongest features yet... although it's improving. I write a lot of songs but half of them go in the bin, half I leave on the files hoping that someone else might want to use them — and the rest I pick out for myself. To be really honest, when I signed as a solo artist it took me a while to work out what it was I really wanted to do. This is it.

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"A Right Rancid Moany Old Git..."

... That's JOHN LYDON, alias PiL, summarising himself again. With a fresh courtroom triumph, a new album, (called *Album*) and even a hit single under his belt, the Artist is laughing. ADAM SWEETING (the Journalist) talks him into an Interview.

Photograph (pic: A.J. BARRATT)

"I'M here for purely commercial gain, and that's the way it is," John Lydon explained by way of introduction. "Not that I need the money, but every little extra bit counts."

He hasn't changed much. He's 30 now, his complexion is still that familiar pasty white, and his eyes often bore out at you malevolently. With his carrotty hair twisted like pipe-lighters, his body slight and cramped, he resembles an albino puppet, or some sort of Dickensian pick-pocket. He is, however, relaxed and easily amused nowadays. Rather entertaining company, in fact, when he decides to talk.

"It was great to see all those wankers out there," he continues, recalling his infamous press conference, "who didn't dare to be sarky with me 'cos the rest would then have pinned them to the ground. I let them get on with their own battle and just wafted across the top of it. I liked that. I thought I successfully made them look like the wankers they are. That's my opinion... and you're *fuming*."

Actually I'm just glad he's talked for 45 seconds without me having to egg him on with increasingly lame questions. It's hard work interrogating a man whose only object is not to tell you anything.

Certain topics goad him into life, luckily. His recent legal victory against the slippery Malcolm McLaren clearly fills him with unbridled jubilation, for instance. It appears the case has been brewing for years. Lydon only went to court, as he tells it, when he was sure he could win.

"The case has been festering for eons, hasn't it? It's *outrageous* that it took so long — anybody got a light? — but it's nice to win." He lit a cigarette and emitted a knowing chuckle.

No love lost between you and the great man, then?

"There's nothing great about *him*," snarled Lydon. "Except he *grated my nerves*, and that's about it.

He seems to be doing all right for himself, though.

"Yeah, well he managed to outswindle himself, didn't he? He lost that case with *classic* style."

Revenge is sweet?

"I didn't fight this case for revenge." (*Course nôt.*) "I fought it because what was rightfully mine was denied to me for so long, and so justice won out! But it cost a fortune in costs. It's a 10-year case. It's ludicrous. He wouldn't settle. He thought I had no case — a *sorry mistake*. My barrister wanted me in the witness box and that's what we were rushing forward to, and that's when Malcolm backed down."

His voice dropped to a slow, deliberate smirk.

"I'd be *rather good* there."

He pondered for a moment, savouring the idea of a flattened McLaren (*also a resident of LA these days, ironically. Hope they don't go to the same supermarket*). "He looked a wally in court in his knickerbockers. Someone should have photographed that..."

LYDON had subjected himself to a series of bouts with the press, lest we forget, because his fabulous single *Rise* is getting almost as much airplay as AOR stalwarts like Dire Straits.

Lydon is amazed and delighted, having spent so long banned from the airwaves because of his Sex Pistols days. Certainly, *Rise* is a cut or 50 above the horrible *This Is Not A Love Song*, PiL's last single as far as anyone can remember.

The new song is credited to Lydon and Bill Laswell, who also produced. PiL, however, is just Lydon. He merely chooses additional people with whom to work in the studio.

"PiL is technically me, officially me," explained the act, "and anybody I work with on my songs. They are *my* songs. He's a producer, and you have to put their name on the thing. I didn't want no names at all, I wanted it to be completely blank because it really is one of those records where the music is just so *damned good*. Can't be disputed."

Everything's changed, no dispute. The album features drummer Ginger Baker — formerly of Cream, and the sort of chap the Pistols wanted to kill off — as well as Tony Williams, another drummer and a man of impeccable musical pedigree. On guitar is a certain Steve Vai, described by Laswell as a man "maybe taking electric guitar into a whole other area, and maybe past what people even expect the electric guitar to be able to do."

"Let's face it, I am one of the world's vainest human beings, and I love it."

"Damned fine people," says Lydon, perhaps or perhaps not sarcastically. "It can be quite frightening working with professionals. I liked it. There's a few Africans floating around too, and a chap called Shankar on violin and Sakamoto on keyboards. Not a bad team. That's like winning 10-nil before you begin!"

Don't be ridiculous. Let's move on to personal weaknesses...

"I'm not going to tell you about them."

Yes you are.

"Vanity. Let's face it, I am one of the world's vainest human beings, and I love it."

Laziness too, perhaps?

"Naaah, everybody says that and it couldn't possibly be true. I work bloody hard when I work. And work very well too — not as often as most people, because I don't feel the need to rush into things. I don't like to do anything unless I'm completely sure about it. This album took about two years to write; I spent a lot of time on it, and getting the people together that I thought would do the best job and the cheapest. Money was a bit of a problem."

Basically, Lydon would prefer to do nothing almost all the time. He loathes the music business, hates New York ("one big stinking traffic jam"), despises video ("the Polaroids of the film industry"), and thinks most known pop stars are worthless dickheads. Consequently, he finds property speculation intriguing.

"I find real estate quite an interesting hobby. I like buying and selling for outrageously extravagant prices. It's a good way of earning money by doing nothing at all. My old house in London, I got it for £14,000. It's now worth £120,000. Outrageous. Amazing. It looks like four dirty grey walls to me, but I won't say no to the loot. No qualms at all about selling it at that price. What a bargain!"

Meanwhile, what of his former PiL cohorts, Keith Levene and Jeanette?

"I've no idea."

Don't care?

"No, not at all. They're not doing anything, obviously."

Did you feel you were just carrying them?

"I've had a lot of dead weight around me over the years, yeah. Driftwood. Funny that, yes... now I come to think of it, most of the people I've worked with have done nothing since. I've destroyed their lives." He lapsed into a long wheezing chuckle. "I'm *bad news*, boys and girls."

Presumably nobody asked you to do Live Aid?

Lydon looked appalled. "No, and quite rightly so and all, 'cos the answer would be *no*, most definitely. What a no-hope project that is."

Why?

ON SUN CITY: "Sounds like a load of foolishness to me. Just don't play there, simple..."

"Because it's politically motivated, it has to be. Someone's behind it, it's not Geldof. He's just a figurehead. And he's going to have to account for an awful lot of money, and we all know it's going to happen — we've all seen Bangla-fucking-desh, haven't we? All the goodwill in the world doesn't amount to fuck-all if it's not properly directed. What those people need is education, irrigation. Not a ham sandwich. So everyone will get a ham sandwich for one day. That's about it really, isn't it?"

And Sun City?

"That sounds like a load of foolishness to me. Just *don't play there*, simple, but you don't have to go and shout and scream and rave about it and put out a record and go 'oooh, look how clever I am, I really care'. It's daft. Where's the money going?"

Enough of that, then. You may recall that Lydon appeared in a film called *Order Of Death*, with Harvey Keitel, once upon a time. It was lousy, and he didn't enjoy it very much. He hasn't done any acting since, but would if someone offered him a decent script...

"Harvey's a bit brutal. He takes this method acting well too seriously. Those were real scenes. I've still got the bruises to show it. It wasn't that difficult, though. I stayed blind drunk most of the time, which helped. It was a lousy script, impossible to follow or understand. Made very little sense.

"They ruined it in America at the premiere, they showed the end first and it was reviewed as such, terrible. It bombed really badly because of that. It was never made to be a big seller, it was done on a very low budget for next to nothing, apart from Harvey's wages of course.

"Most of the scenes, I didn't have the slightest idea what was happening. I was completely clueless because Harvey would be there rewriting the scenes at night and I'd come in the next morning, so it was pointless trying to learn dialogue and I just went along with the flow. For that I did quite well, I thought. Doesn't look like I'm totally confused."

Does he not find it astonishing that people still pay to see him after the dismal performances he's turned in over the years? Because he's just taking the punters for a ride, after all...

"I suppose even though I'm utterly bland, that's shocking in itself."

"No, I offer a well entertaining show," he chortled.

You believe that, do you?

"Yes, I do. I can't really lose at this smugness I've invented for myself. Must be infuriating for all you journalist chaps out there."

Won't everyone turn round one day and say 'Sod it, he's gone too far this time?'

"No. I'm thoroughly amazed by people's stupidity. I like to push things to their absolute limit, but I'm not doing that when I make records or performances. But I do like to play with the interviews. I suppose even though I'm utterly bland, that's shocking in itself."

The only thing that seems to prick him out of his mocking cynicism is the thought of Alex Cox's forthcoming movie about Sid Vicious and Nancy, *Love Kills*.

"A thoroughly disgusting thing to do," fumes Lydon, though it's not clear whether he's affronted more by the idea of Cox making a comedy of Sid's life or by the fact that someone will portray Rotten in the film.

"Without me being consulted, that's quite appalling bad business on his part, very rude. I'm still alive, *boy*. He just might get some serious legal action. I'll have to consider that. Bloody rude. I don't forget things like that very easily."

For the meantime, however, we can savour the prospect of his heavy-metallish new album, also available on compact disc for those of you with more money than sense.

And finally, John, what will you be when...

"I'm 64? A right rancid moany old git."

John Lydon, this is your life.

THE FIGHT FOR WHITE CITY

Ever the multi-media artisan, r'n'r soldier and articulator of our time, PETE TOWNSHEND has skirted the black as much as embraced the bright lights. With the release of his new solo album/video 'novel' *White City* (directed by Richard Lowenstein), PHIL STAFFORD faces the face of Who Townshend *thinks* he is...

'MY GENERATION, I was born practically the day the war ended. I think I was brainwashed like so many people of my age into believing that success was tied up with the pursuit of heroism. That seems very much what the first wave of sixties rock'n'roll musicians perpetuated...''

Talkin' 'bout whose generation? If yesterday's war babies are today's shell-shocked adults, then Pete Townshend could well be the big daddy bombardier of them all. He's already been decorated several times in his 20-plus years of rock'n'roll service, and in fact wears a medal of valour (loaned) on the cover of White City — his new album cum long-form video project, a self-described 'novel' set to film and music'. Based loosely on his own life as a war baby torn between rote tradition and raucous change, White City is to Townshend the spoils of his own paramilitary struggle: adjustment to success and adversity, in roughly equal doses. A triumph over circumstance...

Townshend was born within a mile or so of the White City, an actual council housing estate built just prior to W.W.II. Though it's undergone steady decline since the end of the war, it still stands today as a sort of fortress, a monument to the imperial vision of mid-century Britain; a failed utopia, now a crucible of imported cultures.

''It's a very electric and alive place with a big immigrant community,'' says Townshend of the contemporary White City. ''There's a lot of Irish, Caribbeans mixed in with the obviously indigenous community. Right now there's a big influx of gypsies and travellers...''

One such visitor was Townshend himself, who in mid-'84 returned to the district from which he and the rest of the Who sprang in 1960, bent on breaking the strictures of their working-class environment. He'd discovered a ''short way home'' through the estate to his native Chiswick, where he now lives as he once did — albeit in slightly improved surroundings.

''I think the intention was to create a small 'garden city', as we call them in Britain,'' he says of the White City estate. ''I was driving through the area a lot, and at first I was struck by the fact that all the street names were connected with the British Empire. The actual idea for White City was based on my roots as a post-war child, and the way it relates to the decline of the British Empire.''

A grandiose theme perhaps, but not without foundation. A stroll through the streets of White City uncovers signposts like 'Commonwealth Rd' and 'Australia St' — symbols of a now all-but-forgotten era when Brittania Ruled The Waves. One could draw a parallel with the rise and fall of such other British institutions as the Who... the Union Jack cracks?

''I talked to the man who runs the cafe in White City that I used to occasionally use,'' recalls Townshend of that visit two years back. ''It's been here about 30 years in various locations, and it's in a new building now — his mother and father used to run it before him. And I asked him in what way had the White City changed, and he said 'It's gone right downhill'. And then his father chipped in and said: 'In the good old days, I used to walk around the estate trying to find scraps of food in the gutter.'

''People tend to look back on tremendous adversity, and once it's cast into the past, they feel in some way that it's glamorous or romantic.''

... Not unlike rock'n'roll, in a similarly past tense. Yet Townshend is that rare breed of survivor who, like his contemporary Eric Clapton, subjected himself to the pits of self-inflicted despair for seemingly no other reason than the sheer elation of emerging relatively intact on the other side.

''There are characters in White City who are five or ten years younger than me,'' replies Townshend with a wry smile. ''I wouldn't say I was jealous of them, but I do admire the way they started to break with the old traditions, which I do feel are rather embedded in me. I still feel the best thing that could've happened to me would to have been called up, put in the army and sent off to some battlefield. I mean, people might think that's sick, but I think I was brought up to do that, trained to do that, and I respected people who did it: my father did it, my grandfather did it, and I had to do it in rock'n'roll.''

A little long on glib melodrama, but there's a shrill ring of truth to his words. White City confronts the dichotomy inherent in any community split through a polarity of ideals: both the film and Townshend's songs explore notions of conflict, in all of its many faces. Conflict of ambition, conflict within relationships, the very conflict of existence — does one remain in one's hometown to carve out a life, or does the pursuit of experience lead life further afield? Is adventure to be found in exploration, or adaptation to familiarity?

''When I went to look at the kind of story I wanted to tell with White City,'' Townshend explains, ''I wanted to talk about people who had broken with tradition, people who hadn't suffered from the same sort of wars that I had. In the film I play very much myself really, somebody based on somebody my age with my accomplishments, someone who's travelled around and come back to try and find... I s'pose, some roots. It's not meant to be a period piece in any sense; the story is what's important, the story of the relationships and the way in which these two people work out that relationship.''

The couple Townshend refers to are Jim and Alice, born-and-bred White City locals who choose to remain on the estate and attempt to cope with its depressed post-war economy, its lack of social opportunities and scope for ambition. Jim's an affable — if hard-headed and underqualified — realist, an old friend of Pete's left to brave it on the home front whilst his more 'artistic' mate seeks fame in foreign frontiers. Jim marries Alice, an old flame of Pete's who finds self-assertion the better part of marital drudgery. While Jim drifts from dole queue to odd job in search of his own frustrated identity, Alice refuses to accommodate his festering rage and immerses herself in community work: their relationship is a parallel of Jim's childhood, growing up as the son of a drunkard whose wife spends more time attending to the needs of the customers who frequent the family pub than those of her alienated son.

Says Townshend of their pivotal conflict: ''Jim and Alice are a couple who... Jim for example hadn't done what I'd done, hadn't felt the need to escape, run off and travel the world, make lots of money; he'd not been driven in the same way. He's quite happy to live on the estate, and his life is completely established within the microcosm that it represents. Yet she is one of the new breed of women: she talks for herself, acts for herself, doesn't accept the old roles. She's a feminist, active in the community on her own terms.''

''Me? I went back on the road with the boys. We're still playing soldiers — we'll never learn.''

AT LEAST Townshend has emerged the victor in most of his personal battles. Protracted bouts with heroin and alcohol, the death of close friends and the drawn-out euphoria/euthanasia of the Who; even his marriage came under threat and survived. What are his own feelings on emotional conflict?

''My belief is that love is almost like a vice,'' he says, choosing words carefully. ''If you relate it to religion, it's something that pervades and perfumes your feelings and emotions... Until you make a commitment to someone, and then it disappears! (laughs). I've never been able to quite work it out, but it's very interesting — 'cos it's obviously the way it's meant to be.

''As far as leaving the Who, I don't regret the end of the Who. I enjoy and always have enjoyed writing and working and recording on my own — I find it a very pure way to work, I can take the criticism that accompanies it that much more easily. I don't feel I'm compromised at all, but neither do I regret any of the time spent with the Who.

''I sometimes think it might have been better for the Who to have finished when Keith Moon died, but neither do I regret the last few years, 'cos they were important in one special respect — in that in America, and uniquely in America, I discovered a completely new audience of 14-year-olds and up. That hasn't happened to me in Europe so much, but certainly in America I felt the latter stage of the Who — post Keith's death — was a very important one.''

It wasn't exactly Townshend's most creatively productive period — with the Who (and his own personal life) on a rapid downward slide, it was his nascent solo career that restored the balance. And now with White City, he's tipped the scales back in his favour. Empty Glass and All The Best Cowboys Have Chinese Eyes, both lone Townshend projects of variable quality, were mere steps on the way back up.

''White City is an extension of everything I've done before,'' he assesses. ''It follows on from Quadrophenia in some ways; Jim might be Jimmy from Quadrophenia 20 years on. It's set in the present day with flashbacks to about 10-15 years ago. The film has three main set music pieces... First there's a song called Give Blood, which I felt reflected the demands that were made of me as a young man — the demands that people believe are being made of them all the time really, they feel they have to give and can't be happy till they've given everything. really written for Jim, but it's not a song about his love affair with Alice — it's a song about his mother, about why he feels his mother has almost seduced him, made him feel she is the only woman in the world...

''The last song is Face The Face; it's a dance track really. I got the idea from reading a piece of T.S. Eliot poetry, called Prufrock; in that, he describes an afternoon in the life of an English gentleman really, and the aging process. There's a line that says 'We must prepare a face to meet the face', and I just loved that image...''

Having faced the music and faced the change, Townshend keeps on looking — for the moment it's found, he's lost it...

'Prone to violence/and prone to shame
I glide in silence/my pride in vain
For no-one remembers/not that I can see
That we were defenders/we were the free'
— White City Fighting

(Pete Townshend)

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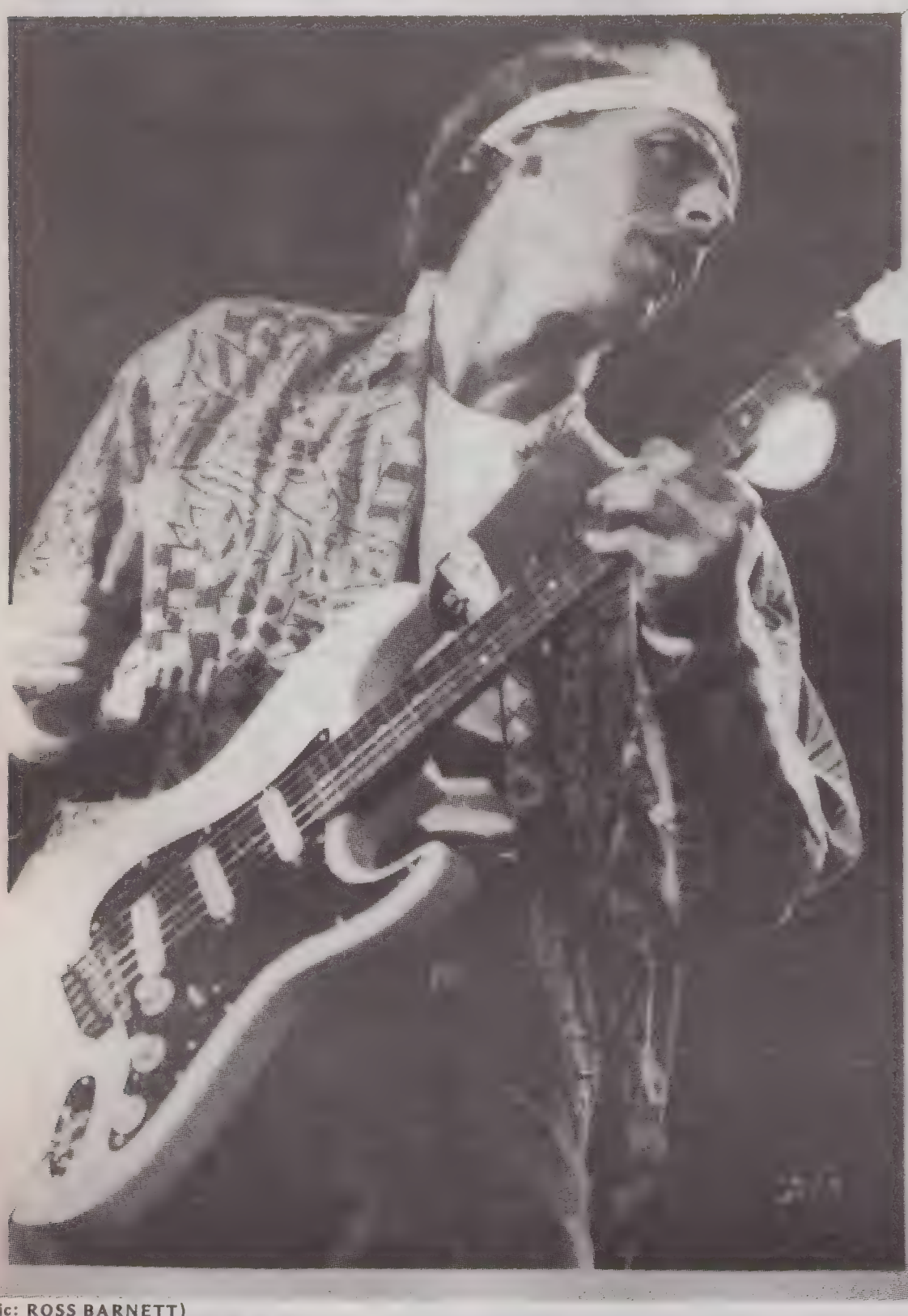


(pic: ROSS BARNETT)

DIRE STRAITS *(King George V Oval, Hobart)*

In terms of press and electronic media coverage, the Dire Straits tour has been the most reported and analysed visit by a foreign band ever. And the ticket sales for the tour — around 800,000 for Australia and New Zealand —is just as unprecedented, especially since punters queued up for their precious tickets some four to five months before the first note was played.

In all, over $16 million will be grossed by the band through ticket sales, with an estimated $4 million likely through the sale of more than 15 items of merchandise — from five designs of T-shirts to headband/wristband sets, sports bags and Shaeffer pens incorporating the tour logo.

It took a year to get the tour together, and requires massive logistical preparations to take the full production of staging, sound and lights from Hobart's initial concerts through ten weeks of touring to the final shows in Perth. Fifty crew are travelling to 50 dates hauling over 50 tonnes of gear. Impressive statistics, but does it add up to an unforgettable experience? Judging from the first two Hobart dates in front of 35,000 devoted fans, there's still some room for improvement. The technical production is certainly the best a band could ask for — an audio monolith Turbosound system, countless lights imaginatively deployed and a stage that a marching band could manoeuvre on with ease. But as Little Richard once said, "It's not the size of the ship, but the size of the waves."

As far as the sound waves went, the volume was there — but the mix lacked balance and separation on the first night, with indistinct vocals and a somewhat muddy sound the result. There was a marked improvement by the second night, but still not quite up to snuff.

Dire Straits don't go in for pyrotechnics and special effects, and with the excellent lighting tending to carry a lot of the performance, the band have no need for over-the-top technological embellishment — settling for a little dry ice at various points in their performance for atmospheric enhancement. It appears the band don't feel the need to move around very much during their set either. The musicianship is certainly there, but for fans expecting a high energy show in the league of performances by Midnight Oil, Cold Chisel, Divinyls or even Bruce Springsteen, the show lacked the stage movement that transmits excitement to the audience and leads to a feedback of energy.

The audience itself on both nights lacked the manic enthusiasm one would have expected, and part of the fault lies with the opening act, which provided no warm-up to the main attraction. A dreadful Melbourne bush band called the Sundowners, they had the thrill factor of a wet cushion and their renditions of tuneless Australiana were ill-received. It would appear that the promoter surmised the Hobart crowd could be entertained by country bumpkin music. Wrong.

Full marks though to Dire Straits on their playing alone, even if it was churned through a dicey mix. Bass player John Illsley and reedman Chris White were the most animated of the band, giving the audience something to look at as the note-perfect music machine ground out 15 songs — most from *Brothers In Arms.* The guitar playing of Knopfler and his foil Jack Sonni was faultless, but just a little too sterile for my liking. Having seen the band several years ago in the US when they were starting out, they then seemed obligated to provide a roaring stage show — and in their music video, *Alchemy Live,* they exhibited the same interplay with the audience which was lacking in the Hobart shows. The problem is that though the closest attendees could see Knopfler's facial expressions as he nursed myriad sounds from his guitar, the rest of the audience had to settle for thumbnail-sized statues — a problem that can be overcome in outdoor shows through the band *working* the audience, not just complacently strumming.

Crowd-pleasers included the standards *Sultans Of Swing, Money For Nothing* and the encores *Solid Rock* and *Going Home,* with the set list also including *So Far Away, Walk Of Life, Brothers In Arms, Private Investigations, Romeo and Juliet, Telegraph Road, Why Worry, Right Across The River, Espresso Love, Industrial Disease* and *Two Young Lovers.*

Reviewing a concert of this magnitude is tough, because it's fairly subjective and depends on one's mood, affinity to the band's music and seating position. I love the band's recordings and am impressed with their videos, my attitude was in order and I wandered the crowd looking for the right sound. Talking to a lot of people after each show, the general opinion was of Dire Straits not living up to expectations. No reason to sell your tickets, but don't believe everything you read...

PHIL TRIPP

VIOLENT FEMMES
The Blind Leading The Naked (Big Time)

Part three in the gospel according to Gano, composer/vocalist for this trio of motley Milwaukeeans — and as far as rhetoric goes, things have hardly changed. It's the same old battle on bended knee, their usual dichotomy of Lust and the Lord, though featuring less of the seething salacity and sexually frustrated hostility included on former discs; outrageous behaviour simply doesn't exist on this one.

It's tamer all round, with only some slight angst and milder romance amid the tapestry of sacraments. Gano is more firmly lodged in the pulpit, braying brat-like as ever on the subject of Faith. In the world of Gordon Gano there's a spirit for everyone, and almost an implication of do-what-you-like-it'll-be-alright-the-confession-box; he's a punky preacher making a living from his own guilt complexes. There's other things too; a good dig at Nancy's ultra-conservatism on *Old Mother Reagan*, some beatific warmth on *Candlelight Song* (first and only contribution from the other Femmes), and an astonishingly good cover of T. Rex's *Children Of The Revolution.*

Major changes occur musically — clearly the result of employing Jerry Harrison (a Talking Head) for production duties. The sound is now less raw than past efforts by Mark Van Hecke, though retains the rough approach to rhythm inherent in most Gano grooves. This is a less frenetic LP; gone is Gano's occasional use of wayward fiddle, bassist Brian Ritchie's exuberant marimba, Victor de Lorenzo's tranceaphone. A big drumkit's in evidence now, and the bass is mainly electric: this is the closest they've come to being a rock band! There's now more meat beneath Gano's beefs, though the contents still invoke mixed feelings — one minute they're adorable, next they're a pack of pompous propagandists, crashing bores on a mission of Jesus PR.

A greater abundance of sidemen appear on *The Blind Leading The Naked*, leading one to assume that the Femmes' next works will come replete with several symphony orchestras and half of America's sessioneers. Harrison contributes guitar and/or keyboards to many a track, Leo Kottke rings in with some fancy fretwork for *Cold Canyon*, and brass, percussion, keyboards and vocals chime in from several contributors.

As fine as the production is and for all the album's good moments, this is a somewhat lacklustre offering. It's difficult to tell whether *The Blind Leading The Naked* is serious sanctification or a sanctimonious sermon. The self titled debut LP — wherein a wider polarity of rabid libido and bible-bashing created conflicts of greater interest — is still their best.

Besides the band's bash at Bolan boogie, the only other really engaging curiosity is the back cover photo — featuring the trio sitting in a semi-busy hair salon with arms buried to the elbows in the mouths of huge red fish. Surrealism lives?

STEVEN CADBURY

FEARGAL SHARKEY
Feargal Sharkey (Virgin)

The startlingly prepossessing cover aside, there's not a great deal on this album to recommend the disbursement of a dozen dollars.

Though I wouldn't for a second begrudge Fergy the international success of *A Good Heart*, and presumably also *You Little Thief*, I feel sure he is capable of better. Still, a Feargal Sharkey song in the Top Ten at least makes *Countdown* more watchable — it demonstrates a semblance of taste, if little else.

It's just that there's nothing here as abandoned and wilful as the Undertones, nothing as poignant and yearning as *Can I Say I Love You?* (the B-side of his first solo single), or *Listen To Your Father*. It doesn't bite.

It's a pop album — and nothing personal, David A. Stewart, but the production is cluttered and muddy. The tracks have a similar feel in the mix, and many just segue into each other... leaving the word 'filler' on my lips. The arrangements leave something to be desired as well— the drum programmes and bass lines are simply not particularly complementary, and instead of a solid beat, the rhythm tends to be sluggish and leaden. It could be that the songs are fine in themselves, and the juxtaposition is the problem. Indeed, if you take them out of context, they're all songs I wouldn't turn off it they came on the radio. It's just that when you put them together you end up with an album bursting with good intentions, but displaying mere spark rather than fire.

The sound is too claustrophobic. Feargal's voice is never allowed to breathe and soar to the heights that it should. Left to carry the can somewhat, his vocals tend to sound forced across the whole 40 minutes. I hate to say it, but he sounds more like a drama queen than a soulster.

Maybe Feargal Sharkey is a singles artist. Maybe he'd be better off with a more sympathetic producer, someone like Hugh Jones (Echo & the Bunnymen, Colour Field) or Robin Millar (Fine Young Cannibals, Sade, Everything But The Girl, Working Week) — someone who knows how to integrate vocals with music without either losing out. What he has to his advantage is a fine voice, and that's what he should be trying to cultivate. If he spends more time thinking about art than marketable units, he may turn in some truly great work. Until then, this tries hard, but it isn't enough.

Like I said, this Sharkey is a mite toothless.

JON CASIMIR

(pix: TONY MOTT/IAN GREENE)

BOB DYLAN/ TOM PETTY & THE HEARTBREAKERS
(Sydney Entertainment Centre)

How many songs must an ancient pop culture phenomenon sing before they can call him a good night out? Not enough; and it the quality of the quantity was any yardstick, far too many. Though only around three hours long, the show seemed to go on forever, with at least a half-hour taken up by tedious 'Hey, rawknrawl!' song finales. Positively fourth rate.

There was something from every page of the catalogue, something for everyone in an audience that spanned at least a twenty-year age differential — folks with kids, Christian representatives, the curious young, even the bloke from my local laundromat. They applauded everything, particularly the old stuff, but the proximity of the legend failed to ignite any real sense of atmosphere. That's because what we were close to had nothing of the air of a rolling stone: instead, the presentation had all the communication skills of a rock fossil. The patter was appalling, full of conceits — a longwinded shopping list of shopworn politicians, film stars and "good friend" Springsteen. And when all names were dropped, a whinge about the day's press conference. Yawn.

PETTY and Co. were great, especially the solid time and tone of drummer Stan Lynch and the sweet'n'sour keyboard lines of Benmont Tench. It's the closest Dylan's gotten to re-exploring the backwoods muscle of his stint, eons ago, with the Band. Petty performed just four songs as group leader, going from a startling and well-received *Refugee* to a predictable (if pleasant enough) cover of the old Byrds song, *So You Want To Be A Rock'n'Roll Star*.

Out ambles DYLAN in clinging leather trousers, looking slightly befuddled. He's strumming an acoustic guitar we can hardly hear until a roadie sprints out and plugs it in. Many laugh at this human moment, but it goes unacknowledged: such is the tone of the entire evening. Well into the night, *Rainy Day Woman* draws some of the masses to the front, but the most deafening cheer greets the announcement of Mark Knopfler's late entry for the overlong encore bash. Four guitars, but little happens — a pop assassin's dream, a listener's nightmare.

This tour, perhaps intended to iron out the kinks in the new alliance for Stateside considerations (gee thanks), was being filmed for longform video release. At least the cameras were reasonably unobtrusive. Perhaps a few lively edits will make something halfway enjoyable out of what seemed like an interminable, sloppy drone of a rehearsal. Far from the expected inventive collaboration, this promising double-bill resembled more an orgy of mutual backslapping, with little scope for musical adventure.

'Oh, mama, can this really be the end...?'

The answer, as Jerry Jeff Walker once said, is pissin' in the wind.

STEVEN CADBURY

TOM WAITS
Rain Dogs (Island/Festival)

Rum-pah-pah-pum. Rum-pah-pah-pum. Step right up! Roll right up! It's Tom Waits' Carnival Of America, the greatest show in town. He's got dreams. He's got nightmares. He's got pain. He's got his soul bare on a wooden plate at a table full of blind negroes and drunken whites, with Bertolt Brecht, George Gershwin and Jack Kerouac singing songs together whilst a murder goes on behind the curtains. It's a strange world, it's a bad world, it's a mad world, Tom's carnival of earthly and unknown delights!

Yes sir. Yes madam. This be a place you might know, *'dangled from a rope of sand'* and very pretty too in a sleazy, ghostly kind of way. Close in breadth to the ragged, jagged, rolling, stolen graces of *Swordfishtrombones*, *Rain Dogs* is the circus YOU have been waiting for.

But for those of you without a memory, we should tell Tom's Story first – a once-upon-a-time whisper that turned into a gravel-stroked shout. The first man ever born out of wedlock, out of a hawk and a dog, the boy grew a Beat poet's beard and took up a piano and took to mumbling... for which he was acclaimed as a genius. He then set about writing songs, drinking a lot, looking seedy and dabbling in a downbeat pool of blues, jazz, rock and burlesque. How could the lad go wrong?

Through the '70s Tom told stories of Italian boys with knives, drunks, prostitutes and broken hearts, with the kind of beauty and ugliness and humour that sounded like the truth. And as everyone knows, the truth is a dangerous, elusive kind of thing. Looking like a victim from one of his own tales, Tom became the King of the down-and-outs, the King of nothing at all.

His gutter-coloured Broadway views attracted Francis Ford Coppola, who got him to write the soundtrack for *One From The Heart*. Tom went to the movies, saw streams of images and artifice, acted in *Rumblefish* and *The Cotton Club*, met his wife Kathleen Brennan, had children, started separating the myth from the man and found a whole new way of seeing (and he didn't even ask God).

Tom tried "to listen to the noise in my head and invent some junkyard orchestral deviations", and what came out was *Swordfishtrombones* — a reinvention of past influences and ideas into a new kind of odyssey through America, land of the brave and the lost. Hosannas were rained upon him. And one of the songs from that journey, *Frank's Wild Years*, is being made into a musical drama with Tom playing a sort of 'demented drum major' on stage.

So, ladies and gentlemen, I'm on my knees for *Rain Dogs*. Step right up! Roll right up! It's got a detective story about nothing happening but the passing of time (*9th & Hennepin*), it's got Keith Richards (Rolling Stones) and Robert Quine (Lou Reed) on guitars, it's got a song about Brooklyn girls that sounds like Springsteen before his heart went deaf (*Downtown Train* — the single), it's got a pump organ and a harmonium, a tattoed tear and a broken clock, and a Robert Frank photo of a mama's boy. It's got Tom Waits spilling his guts like they're made of poetry, like a dog baying at the moon, and the sounds of a strange Salvation Army parade. So step right up for the *Rain Dogs*, for the greatest show in town!

MARK MORDUE

JANE WIEDLIN
Jane Wiedlin (CBS)

Ah, the Go-Go's — sunny goodtime girls and sweethearts of pop charts past. Now the world waits breathlessly as various ex-members wander out of the sunset to cash in on their bygone reputation.

One such is Jane Wiedlin, former Go-Go guitarist eager to prove herself a competent/creative force in her own right. To this end, she's assembled a formidable lineup of sidepeople/technicians for this her debut, and it seems there was hardly an LA sessioneer left idle during its recording.

... Which may explain why the record sounds so faceless, as a plethora of guitars, keyboards, drums, tambourines and horns fall over each other in a rush for equal time. A singular lack of unity is exacerbated by the use of two separate production teams, neither of whom is particularly sympathetic.

As for Jane... a guitarist she may well be, but a singer she ain't. Her tenuous and irritatingly high-pitched warble runs rampant through a wad of boy/girl cliches, the stuff of teen fiction. Lyrically, she'd have us believe that every possible emotional injustice has been inflicted on her, although she looks colourful and cheerful enough in the cover shots — love the baggy day-glo designer suit and reflecto lenses!

Of course, Ms Wiedlin is not short on cultural awareness and social conscience, as *East Meets West* suggests: yes, it's yet another variation on a theme of culture clash — this one a leftover of her recent visit to Japan. Would that xenophobes be forced to surrender their passports on demand... And *Goodbye Cruel World* is unfortunately not about suicide — it's a whinge on the state of the world, where *'no more children hungry or bruised/no more land raped and abused'* is the Utopia Wiedlin dreams of with clumsy naivete.

Yet there are saving graces. *My Travelling Heart*, with its rustic acoustic feel augmented by fiddles and percussion, tells a convincing tale of reluctant infidelity, whilst the spacious drama of *One Hundred Years Of Solitude* gets close to the pathos of Marquez' novel. At least Jane makes no secret of her source material — beats feigning originality.

And just about anything's better than feigning a tradeoff on the Go-Gos' reputation. It's better to make a clean break, and Wiedlin's done that; hopefully the next record will see her moving further into her own realm.

ELIZABETH PADDISON

WALL OF VOODOO
Seven Days In Sammystown (I.R.S.)

In 1981, Wall Of Voodoo's *Dark Continent* album alerted the world to a strange new pop presence. The busy drum machines, synth and percussion noises and Stan Ridgeway's delicious drawl scored them a minor novelty hit in '82 with *Mexican Radio*, after which their singer left them. *SDIS* is their first product to be released locally in three years, and thankfully, many of the band's endearing qualities have been retained by the new lineup.

So what's changed? First of all, new percussionist Ned Leukhardt is playing lots of real drums. This has changed the sound of the band, but not their overall ambience — there is enough percussion for that confused feeling to set in, and a relative lack of cymbals helps to keep the mood generally dark. Then there's new singer Andy Prieboy, whose personality doesn't exactly reach out and grab you by the throat (like Ridgeway's did) but he sounds like he means business. He is also responsible for two of the album's catchiest cuts, *Far Side Of Crazy* and *Blackboard Sky*. It's refreshing to see that in songs like *Blackboard Sky* and Chas T. Gray's *Business of Love* the band takes straightforward ideas and stomps all over them indulgently, the arrangements of these two songs in particular bringing out every ounce of character.

This album also differs from the band's previous work in that the songs, credited to individual band members rather than to the band as a whole, are much simpler. In the past, WOV sometimes crammed many ideas into one song, or used ideas that were complex in themselves. The simplicity of the new songs makes this album more accessible than the first two, but the production does not do justice to the band's arrangement skills, lacking the clarity to unclutter their sound. Occasionally you get the idea that there is more going on than you can really discern.

For those who thought that Ridgeway's departure meant the end of WOV, rest assured that original members Gray and Bruce & Marc Moreland have kept the spirit of the band very much alive. The same quirky motivation keeps the music twitching as engagingly as ever, though it's not quite as exciting as the kitchen-sink approach of the old days. This left-of-centre effort is still hummable and modern sounding enough to make commercial radio, who can (and will) do a hell of a lot worse than this.

JOHN ENCARNACAO

SISTERS OF MERCY
First And Last And Always (WEA)

Almost everything about this album — music, lyrics and cover design —seems calculatedly 'alternative'. It's all so black and *sinister*. If you have ebony hair, a leather jacket and a crucifix, then it's you all over. In short, this band and this album exude 'image' to such an extent that it's difficult to take the angst seriously.

But musically, it's great. The Sisters utilise to the fullest the limited barrage of sounds and styles at their disposal, and their biggest asset is singer/songwriter Andrew Eldritch. His voice is rich, raw and resonant, and he sings with a passion that comes from the soul — as black as his may be.

The guitars dance, the drums are strong and steady, and the bassist is, er... an individual. All seem to have the unlimited patience and control to pace the songs, which are *slow*.. The haunting *Marian* is a high point, dripping barbiturate emotion.

A well-orchestrated, well-written and well-performed album. I like it, and I don't even own a leather jacket.

RACHAEL FOXTON

MALCOLM McLAREN
Swamp Thing (Virgin)

The Maladjusted one's recently had his bank balance rearranged by the rightful owners of much of its contents — namely, the ex-Sex Pistols. So what else can a poor Malcontent do, but release another record?

Trouble is, it's a despicably desperate attempt at regaining the scheckels. All remixes of duck and buffalo manure mingling with Malcy's well-known quiz game: Spot the Original! But for a chord change or two, the music on the title track is Chip Taylor's *Wild Thing* — perhaps he should be told.

Most of the material here suffers from this mode of extreme Maladministration. It was all originally recorded from '82 to '84, so no new tunes — just a plethora of fresh Maladies. Mad Mac's gone in blindfolded, armed with expensive studio cosmetics and cut-ups of the corpses' garments that were second-hand first time round.

Simply another Malaise

MAX PENALTY

HUNTERS AND COLLECTORS
Say Goodbye (Mushroom)
... In which John Archer discovers that he really can play funky bass after all, and Mark Seymour drags out desperation-point vocals that bulge with as much strength as his singlet-enshrined muscles. The new, human Hunters are brilliant. Yep, despite the slightly worrying backup vocals, they're brilliant. Tie for single of the month, and an early contender for single of the year.

HOUSEMARTINS
Flag Day (Chrysalis)
A definite case of content over style with this one. Let's face it, any pals of Billy Bragg can't be at all bad. This lot prefer a more, er, subtle approach to songsmithery than our William, but the politics are there — fair and square. Very English, very pretty, quite despairing, ultimately honest. A kind-of acoustic Bronskis, who aren't afraid of quaint old-fashioned virtues like nous, conscience and conviction. Onya lads!

AUSTRALIAN CRAWL
Two Hearts (Freestyle)
Obviously determined not to go out on an overly sentimental note, Australian Crawl have chosen to release a record that no-one — even those under the influence of radical chemical substances — could possibly warm to. I began to really like James Reyne after his honest and usually witty observations on *Beatbox* last year, but oh crikey — this record's astonishing badness and its foul production reminds me exactly why I gave Australian Crawl such a wide berth for the duration of their career. Good luck with your acting career, James.

TALK TALK
Life's What You Make It (EMI)
Obligato of the week. A deceptively plodding, ponderous song, which gets progressively more eerie and passionate with each listening. It's an indication of what intelligent pop can really be like, and I'll wager that they are their record company's marketing nightmare.

TOM PETTY & THE HEARTBREAKERS
So You Want To Be A Rock And Roll Star (MCA)
A live version of yer basic Byrds classic: despite Tom's incredibly attractive vocal inflections, I still ask myself, 'Why bother?' Needless to say, if you really wanna rock, seek out the 20-minute live rendition on the Byrds' *Untitled*. *That's* class.

KRYPTONICS
Baby (Cherry Top)
And a big hello to Perth. The vocals are pushed so far up front on this thrash that it's well nigh impossible to hear anything else. Is there a drummer in there somewhere? Well, despite the fact that singer Michael Reynolds doesn't do the greatest bad-ass imitation in the world, *Baby* may be a worthy addition to your record collection if you can't get to Detroit this year.

SURPRISE SURPRISE
Cried All My Tears (Method)
This one gets the guernsey for 'Worst Record Cover Of The Month'. Surprise Surprise are quite capable of putting in some fun performances, but this single does them no justice at all. It goes nowhere, really fast. Still, you can hear the beginnings of something there, so I'd like to suggest that everyone stay tuned.

FLOCK OF SEAGULLS
Who's That Girl? (Liberation)
Plucking awful.

JOAN JETT
Cherry Bomb (Liberation)
Having seen the video of this single, and *loved* it, I find it hard to separate the two. Basically, it's just Joan beating the living daylights out of her (and my) very fave Runaways song. Now, everyone knows that Joan is a truly nice gel, but musical subtlety is not one of her strong points. OK, so I'll admit this version sucks... but hell, the video is great!

SIMPLE MINDS
Sanctify Yourself (Virgin)
Oh, spare me the sight of Jim 'The Fop' Kerr on the cover of this single staring lovingly into the eyes of a dove. Ridiculous. Was a time when Simple Minds had just enough of a mystical sense of whimsy to make them a truly delicious proposition. It was when The Fop started waffling on endlessly about his so-called 'gift of vision' that it all began to look a bit, well, space cadet. Self-righteousness has never been an attractive personality trait.

AUTOGRAPH
Blondes In Black Cars (RCA)
Pick up record. Move towards the edge of any available cliff. Release grip on record. Watch it sink without trace. Heave a giant sigh of relief. Go home.

JOANNA GARDNER
Watching You (Polydor)
Oh Joanna, *never* take lollies from record company execs.

FX
Only You (Wheatley)
Alex Smith on a massage machine.

SPEAR OF DESTINY
Come Back (Epic)
Half-baked 'revolutionary' lyrics... an organ player who should be shot... a rather plodding arrangement... pedestrian vocals. What can I say? I like it.

BOB DYLAN
Emotionally Yours (CBS)
There's a time and place for everyone and everything. Anyone who is holding out on behalf of Bob, hoping he will come up with something world-shattering in this decade, is pissing — not blowing — in the wind.

VOODOO LUST
Shake Shake Hey Yeh (Sundown)
Could we have a quick round of applause for Sundown records, please? You may have noticed that they have released some heavy-duty Queensland stuff over the past coupla years. And Voodoo Lust are no exception — a raw Romantics-style of tune, with loud but cute guitar from an entity simply called 'Hound Dog'. Cheap and nasty, but spirited and fun. Keep 'em coming, Sundown.

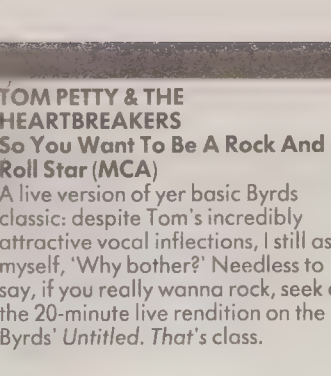
BAD MANNERS
What The Papers Say (Portrait)
A Nicky Tesco style of vocal from the revolting Buster, and a general Members funk-o feel. An interesting direction for Bad Manners, and it works. Nice, tight understated horns, and a minimum of drama and messing around. Good radio fodder.

NAUGHTY RHYTHMS
Is It Love? (Survival)
After a rather atmospheric start, George Clift's vocals let this song down a wee bit. Still, it has a warm and friendly mood, clean production and a faithful if unadventurous adherence to white ska-pop... and some nice sax. Passes muster.

MARTIN PLAZA
Concrete And Clay (CBS)
In which Monsieur Plaza adequately tackles a song with so much inbuilt savvy that a demolition squad would be hard pushed to destroy it. The only criticism could be that he's played it all a bit too safe and obvious: nice production. I prefer Marty's bleeding-heart version of *Ruby Don't Take Your Love To Town*.

VIOLENT FEMMES
Children Of The Revolution (Big Time)
I'm reliably informed by greater Femme fans than I, that this is the best track on the new album. Hmmm. The production *is* rather lovely, it's Jerry Harrison, always the most underrated Talking Head. Sounds great, but decidedly un-Femmes. Score: Jezza 9 out of 10, Femmes 2 out of 10.

ZZ TOP
Stages (WEA)
Like Van Halen, ZZ Top are so hysterically offensive that you've just gotta laugh. Dags to a man, the Zee's are awright by me. *Stages* is dripping with the usual sensational Bill Ham production, but falls over and dies somewhere before the end of the first verse. Still, Billy Gibbons has, in the recent past, expressed his fandom for Severed Heads, so any slagging of this single stops right...



A SACK-FUL OF SINGLES

VIRGINIA MONCRIEFF bags the 7-inchers whilst CRAIG N. PEARCE rummages through the dance mixes.

12" ⌄

JAMES BROWN
Living In America (Epic)
Trans-global funk attack, with Mr *Please Please Me* proclaiming his true right wing ideals on a track *made* for Reagomania PR and couched comfortably within the retro slop of *Rocky IV*. Forgetting the ham for just one moment though, this is runaway radio funk. It relies on a vicious bass syncopation and not a few godfatherly incantations to keep its body working. On import it's tempting; released locally it's a steal.

CHERELLE & ALEXANDER O'NEILL
Saturday Love (CBS Import)
Though I prefer the LP version, this 12-inch of 1986's finest moment so far will do no harm to the fierce seam of soul being mined here. Already a huge crossover hit in England, *Saturday Love* seems to be selling mega just about everywhere. Featuring a delicious, understated dance groove and some heavenly harmonies, this must be one of the Jam/Lewis hit factory's best yet. Without this song in your head, you're simply out of *time*!

SIMPLE MINDS
Sanctify Yourself (Virgin)
TALKING HEADS
And She Was (EMI)
EURYTHMICS
It's Alright (Baby's Coming Back) (RCA)
When glam-pseuds like the Minds get a hold of the 12-inch medium, they do all they can to fuck up the dancefloors and the airwaves. Simple Minds died long ago, taking with them thin (huh!) Jim Kerr's sex appeal.

And She Was and *It's Alright* are polite, tolerable 7-inch pop songs. As 12-inchers, they're repetitive to the point of bleak, grey tedium.

A FLOCK OF SEAGULLS
She's Got It (Liberation)
JUMP INCORPORATED
Sex And Fame (Mushroom)
ZERRA ONE
Rescue Me (Phonogram)
TALK TALK
Life's What You Make It (EMI)
Twelve inches of synthetic thumping: Jump Inc. sound like a glossy Slade at their most sickeningly bloated. *Sex And Fame* instills within me a damp, mournful desire to stamp on Top 40 fodder forever. This includes proto-synth-driven pomp-rock like Zerra One. Talk Talk are the best of this bunch, *Life's What You Make It* being a thin but still interesting piece of gauche pop. And A Flock Of Seagulls continue to carve out a career in music for no apparent reason.

SHAKATAK WITH AL JARREAU
Day By Day (Polygram)
JAKI GRAHAM
Heaven Knows (EMI)
BILLY OCEAN
(When The Going Gets Tough, The Tough Get Going (Liberation)
All three of these songs would be classed as 'soul' by some. To me they're miles away. Songs like this could just as easily have been made by a computer, so predictable are the sounds. *Day By Day* — limpid pop well suited to the cocktail hour — is the best of a sorry bunch.

STAPLE SINGERS
Are You Ready? (Epic)
PAUL HARDCASTLE
Just For Money (Festival)
JOANNA GARDNER
Watching You (Polygram)
A rather disappointing effort from the Staples. It's a raucous yet pedestrian formula-funk version of the mid-70s classic.

Just For Money would seem to be exactly that. Reworking the easy formula of *19*, Hardcastle once again attempts to coerce us all into enlarging his already well-stocked coffers. Treat with suspicion.

Joanna Gardner has at her convenience a handy little dance floor tonic which emanates, no doubt, from New York (it's a beat). Gardner is another in the long line of great American voices. These voices, as in this instance, often come shrink-wrapped in a producer's ideas. Often, again, that's no bad thing.

TAKA BOOM
Middle Of The Night (Boiling Point — Import)
Sister of Chaka Khan. Been around forever. Used to sing with the Undisputed Truth (*You + Me = Love, Higher Than High*). Now has a third attempt at a solo career and comes out *HOT*. *Middle Of The Night* is a lurching funk song hooked to a crunching selection of rhythm components. Sweet as candy, hard as nails. Essential.

JUSTIN HAYWARD
Silverbird (Liberation)
THE ART OF NOISE
Legs (Chrysalis)
MIDGE URE
That Certain Smile (Chrysalis)
SLADE
Do You Believe In Miracles? (RCA)
It's with this cretinous collection of non-songs that we should pause, silent for a moment, and mourn the passing of pop music. These 'artistes' seem like nothing more than its gravediggers.

AL GREEN
Going Away (Festival)
More suited to a late night spin than an early attempt at floor filling, *Going Away* builds from a spare, glowing beat to a gorgeous combination of Al's voice and some sumptuous horns charted by No. 1 soul producer, Willie Mitchell. *Going Away*, like the album from which it's lifted, is pure spiritual medicine.

TROUBLE FUNK
Still Smokin'
CHUCK BROWN & THE SOUL SEARCHERS
Sho' Nuff Right (T.T.E.D. — Imports)
Okey dokey folks, all familiar with the term 'Go Go' are we? That vicious, tight bitch of a beat which is one part Afro to three parts *serious* shit? Good. 'Cos that's what *Still Smokin'* is, and more. T. Funk, the Kings of Go Go lay it out straight and strong in a mighty deep groove taken off the soundtrack for *Good To Go*, a film based around the notoriously *bad* (you hip to the trip?) Washington D.C. Go Go scene. Slated for release SOON.

Godfather of Go Go (titles are easily tagged but well earnt in these two cases) Chuck Brown leads his masterful Soul Searchers through a delightful jazz-infected stomp which swings like sin. Though not as commercial as *We Need Some Money*, Chuck's smash dance tune from *Sho' Nuff Bumpin'* (1984) has enough subtle insouciance sunk within its sparkling horn riffs and tightrope bass lines to murder any unsuspecting dancefloor dodo. Chuck? *Hungry* for blood!

THE TEMPTATIONS
Do You Really Love Your Baby? (Gordy — Import)
EARL THOMAS
Love Caught You By Surprise (4th & B'way — Import)
The Temps are at it again. An ace dance number from their recent LP, *Touch Me*, it slips easily beside last year's *Treat Her Like A Lady* and *Touch Me*'s next single, *Oh Lover*, to create a triumvirate of combustible dance songs — sweet as a kiss and complete as a hug.

New face Earl Thomas has a great modern soul track here, which is a perfect antecedent to the man's proclaimed love of 50s and 60s black music. Fresh as a daisy. If this track is an indication of the man's future offerings, then you can count me in as one of his fans.

7" ⌃

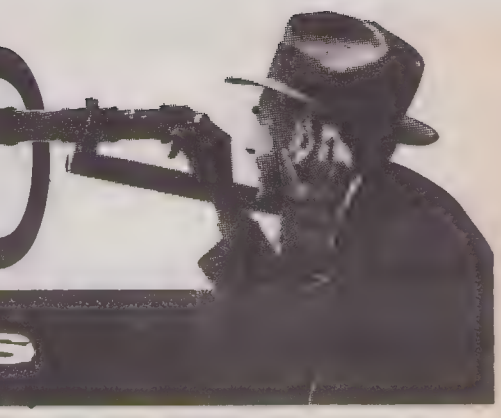
JELLYBEAN
Sidewalk Talk (EMI Import)
A song consistently passed over by foreign media in the year since it was initially released, now a 7- and 12-inch form, *Sidewalk Talk* was a smash hit on Melbourne's dancefloors last year and deserves greater recognition. It's a jazz-tinged, hip-hop juggled and ice-pick funk tune. Irresistible, and Madonna wrote it!

CAMEO
Attack Me With Your Love (Polygram)
Taken from last year's *Single Life* LP (yet to be released locally to my knowledge), *Attack Me With Your Love* followed the album's title track into the top of the world's black charts as well as the English mainstream charts. The Brits are hooked on Cameosis. *Attack* shows why: like their big 1984 smash *She's Strange*, it's pinned to an acid-funk bass riff so catchy it can make you cry. Over this outrageously horny rhythm, smart synth hooks are spun beautifully, weaving in with some distinctly idiosyncratic and soulful vocals. Pop or funk? Both! Just let Larry Blackmon and the boys do it to ya!

TRAMAINE
In The Morning Time (A&M Import)
THE THREE DEGREES
The Heaven I Need (Chic Import)
Tramaine is a woman with a wealth of experience, having released several albums (none of which I've heard) and being well versed in voice from her intensive gospel training. *In The Morning Time* follows her monster hit from last year, *Fall Down*. Though not reaching the heady heights of that delicious tune, Tramaine's new one has a cute melody on which she lets loose in her normal blistering fashion.

The Heaven I Need, on the other hand, is some beautiful shit. Sprung on supreme harmonies and the most addictive, beguiling groove I've heard in *ages*, this song has all those with taste in absolute rapture.

SEEN and HEARD



RECORDS • LIVE ACTS • FILMS

NICO
(Trade Union Club, Sydney)

It takes an extraordinary performer to transcend the combined distractions of noisy yobs and an inadequate sound mix. But then Nico is nothing if not extraordinary. Her very special magic was, thankfully, not wasted on most of the enchanted throng at the Trades. As for the philistine minority — well, maybe she's right and we *do* need the Baader-Meinhof Gang back again!

Nico glided through a beautifully uncompromising set like the captain of a slow and steady and very ancient ship. Some of the songs were unfamiliar, and several of her German compositions were featured, most notably *Das Lied Von Einsames Maedchens* from the recent *Camera Obscura*. The only Velvets' selection was an acappella *All Tomorrow's Parties* ("So old that it's new"), but that was so powerful and penetrating as to be almost literally chilling. Anyone who thinks Nico's voice is unemotional has never really listened to her sing, and certainly not in concert.

Though the most exquisite moments involved nothing more than the woman and her harmonium, it would be very hard indeed to fault her backing band, the Faction. Colourful, inventive and determinedly delicate — even on the most harrowing material — the two keyboard players and drummer complemented her gothic *cris-de-coeur* with style and restraint; melancholia never became monotony.

But if the bulk of the gig had been rich and entrancing, I am quite at a loss to convey the intensity of *The End*. Nico has been recreating and reinterpreting the old Doors' nightmare since (at least) 1974, and I had seen her do so on various occasions — but never with anything like this passion or desperation. When her head jerked spastically to rest, as if she had been hanged, it was more exhaustion than theatre: an unforgettable moment.

After such a performance, anti-climax was not only inevitable but quite pleasantly cathartic. Following Rogers and Hart's *My Funny Valentine* (apt enough on February 14th), the night came to a late but moving end with *Sixty Forty*, Nico's bittersweet paean to "New York Lower East Side fame". *'Those tears are carved inside your brain'*, she sang, and they were.

MARK DEMETRIUS

(pic: FRANCINE McDOUGALL)

TOM PETTY & THE HEARTBREAKERS
Pack Up The Plantation — Live (MCA)

Live albums rarely work — you have to *be there*. Otherwise you're merely taken on the usual ride through well-worn back catalogues, and the general impression smacks of contractural obligation. The other drawback relates to the live format itself — each song is crowned with a resounding 'KA-THUNK' (fadeouts in performance being a little difficult to pull off), and a double album full of 'em leans towards the predictable.

Pack Up The Plantation is no exception in any department, but at a mere $14.99 (generous if you're low on past Petty), it's better value than most. As the ostensible soundtrack for a forthcoming performance film of the same name, it promises 'The Greatest Hits' plus four 'Never Before Released Live Performances'. These last are actually cover versions: the Animals' *Don't Bring Me Down*, the Byrds' *So You Wanna Be A Rock'n'Roll Star* (a somewhat inexplicable choice), the Isley Brothers' *Shout* (surprisingly laboured and leaden), and the Searchers' *Needles And Pins*, with cutesy backing vocals from Stevie Nicks. For the rest, thrill to faithful renditions of several past singles along with selected cuts from last year's underrated *Southern Accents* LP.

There's no contest that Petty & Co. have notched up a fine roster of tunes in their decade or so of aural Americana, and they've managed to traverse a traditional course of r'n'r, C&W and r'n'b via plangent pop songs — whilst still moving with the times in the areas of lyrics and technology. It's all here, and in the hands of a redoubtably excellent live band. It can cook up a banquet with meat and potatoes, can drop on a feel like a flying limpet and rocks tight as a shark-bite. Strange then that the Heartbreakers only get to stretch out on *It Ain't Nothin' To Me*, and the sublime *The Waiting* ain't even here!

Replete with audience squeals, claps, shrieks, whistles and impressions of roosters at sunrise (what fun it must have been!), the live buzz unfortunately doesn't transcend the vinyl. Occasional brass only detracts from proceedings, and Petty's nasal whine does tend to grate over four sides of an album. But at least it's better value than just four songs at his recent joint live shows with the Zim... and two of those were covers! Guess you had to *be there*...

STEVEN CADBURY

PHILIP GLASS
Mishima (Nonesuch)

Don't let the fact that this is a film soundtrack cause you to use it as background music — less than 100 percent attention may cause you to miss some magic moments, such as the initial buildup of the opening theme. A study of anticipation, this flurry of activity is made up of rustling percussion and gossiping strings (minus the adjectives, the predominent instrumentation of the album) leading unexpectedly into a soaring arpeggio figure, a Philip Glass trademark. The question is how many times can the words majestic, glorious etc be used to describe this man's music?

If you have heard any of Glass's other works, you will be familiar with his minimalist approach. The music for *Mishima* seems to all have been derived from one grand chord structure which gives the album unity. Fragments of this are given almost a theme-and-variations treatment, with the thoughtful use of dynamics and instrumentation imparting variety. As for individual pieces, Glass's style is to have two or maybe three different section within a piece, repeating each a number of times before moving onto the next, making subtle changes with each successive statement of a theme or fragment. Although this may sound dull, the effect is rather hypnotic, especially when different sections are played simultaneously, creating a cacophonous and delightfully confusing harmony. Glass also excels at writing rhythmically ambiguous figures, so that the introduction of more instruments changes the accents entirely.

The most is made of the string/percussion combinations, from string quartet and tympani to seemingly huge ensembles. Conductor Michael Riesman has an enviable ear for detail when it comes to tone colour. He also elicits some sensitive performances from his charges.

Glass uses other instruments sparingly for splashes of colour — both harp and electric guitar are combined tastefully with the other stringed instruments to create new textures. At one point, some jazz-style drumming joins the guitar and a double bass to mould yet another different sound for the by now familiar chords. One facet of Glass's work not exhibited here is his stunning use of voices (see *North Star* or *Koyaanisqatsi*), but this is a minor quibble. *Mishima* is both a worthwhile introduction to Glass's unique style and another taste of what to expect of his imminent Sydney concert.

JOHN ENCARNACAO

VARIOUS ARTISTS
049: A Collection Of Newcastle's Finest (PolyGram)

If Newcastle has some weird musical inferiority complex, as this album suggests, then it shouldn't. In 1975 Newcastle produced Rabbit, a no-nonsense rock band who may not have broken any barriers, but really knew what to do with a few guitars. More than a decade later, and at the other end of the musical spectrum, a young Newcastle band called I'm Spartacus is making some of the most original and intelligent music in the country. Sadly, this collection of Newcastle music shows none of that spark.

The tend bands featured on *049* are all pushing in different directions, but the result is generally the same. With the exception of **Waiting For Brasso**, who are so out of place here that one suggests they were included only as a token gesture to the avant-garde, the music lacks even a pretence of adventure. Seven of the ten bands are just plain boring; their songs are spineless and cliched.

The album opens with one of the tired old warhorses of Novocastrian rock, **DV8**. The singer claims he is uninspired, and the music supports his claim. DV8's *On The Street* is a wimpy ode to good old rock'n'roll, and a gratuitous slur on disco. The band obviously craves power, but hasn't the slightest idea where power comes from. For example, DV8's bassist is so determined to show off his finger gymnastics that he can't add any guts to the bottom end of the song. The guitarist is equally skilled, but his lead solo has no direction. And DV8's problems, in various degrees, are common to many of these bands: *Easy Love* by **RU1** is a confused pastiche of rock, pop and misplaced funk bass; **Vegemite Reggae**'s *My Girl* doesn't ring true; *Imagination* by **Rats** is simply unpleasant. Only three songs — *Looking For Clues* by **Marguerita Ashford**, *Wonderlove* by **Thunderbirds** and *Confidence* by **Waiting For Brasso** — show any spirit, or appreciation of their respective styles.

All the people on *049* are competent players, but many of them don't appreciate there is a world of difference between someone who plays a musical instrument with ease, and a musician. Most of them lack honesty and discipline.

DAVID BREARLEY

NOT DROWNING WAVING
The Little Desert (Rampant)

The Little Desert is a hard album to listen to. Not because it's sub-standard in any way at all, but because it's so evocative that you tend to float off with your own imagination and forget that the vinyl is turning. In a sense, it's like a doorway into yourself.

With this record, these two men from Melbourne have shed all their past categorisations and established an extraordinary qualitative standard. It's a collection of tunes of exquisite beauty and vivid imagery, of hinted power and dream-like caress. Recorded in a church for the sake of acoustics, it was digitally mastered ('*Pretty swish huh*?' as the cover notes have it) — some feat for an independent release. The resulting sound is of world-class standard or better, gorgeously produced, laid to vinyl with the care that a special album deserves.

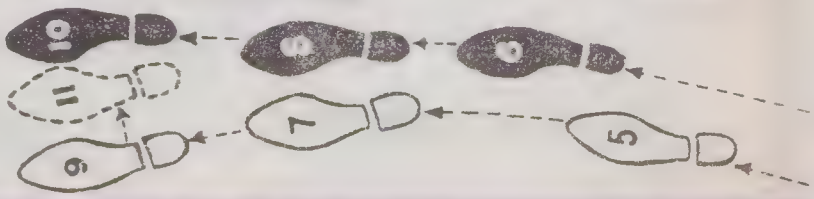
Piano, congas, cello, Korean chimes, brass tubes, triangles, footsteps, drums, guitars, bass, woodblock, flute, rusty trolley, vocals, pre-dawn bird noises, storms, wind, ocean, rocks in a river, old men chatting, a steel mill, a black cockatoo — these are the sounds that make up this musical canvas. They're the elements of dialogue. And it's a two-way experience. You take from this record only as much as you give back to it. It's a record that involves you — too affecting to be ambient, too imaginative to be 'background'.

Bridie's lyrically resonant piano contrasts the impressionistic patterns of Phillip's guitar, which only rarely sounds like something six-stringed and electric. The result is fodder for the senses, inspirational fuel. The beauty of it is that every person will react differently to it, each will find his/her own frame of reference, a unique set of parameters which the atmospheres of this record will expand to fulfill.

You are invited to buy it. If you wish, it can be your ticket to another place. If not, you've still bought one of the most distinctive Australian records for ages, one of the landmarks. I'd heard good things about it before it spun on my turntable, but I was prepared for nothing as intriguing, beguiling, and maddeningly obsessive as *The Little Desert*.

Don't leave your body without it.

JON CASIMIR



LLOYD COLE & THE COMMOTIONS
(Hammersmith Odeon, London)

Lloyd Cole and his Commotions know each of their songs by rote. This was proved to the London audience, but when left to stand by itself the proof falls flat. It is neither entertaining nor revelatory. W.B. Yeats once wrote that "(a song) must have the perfections that escape analysis, the subtleties that have a new meaning every day". He was referring to poetry, but songs of the calibre of Cole's classic *Rattlesnakes* could well be described in this way.

The live context should further extend the possibilities for inspiration, but at the Odeon each song, old and new, was note-perfect, uninspired and bored. Comments like "this is our last song because we need to go home and sleep" only helped to underscore the indifference that settled upon the band from the opening number.

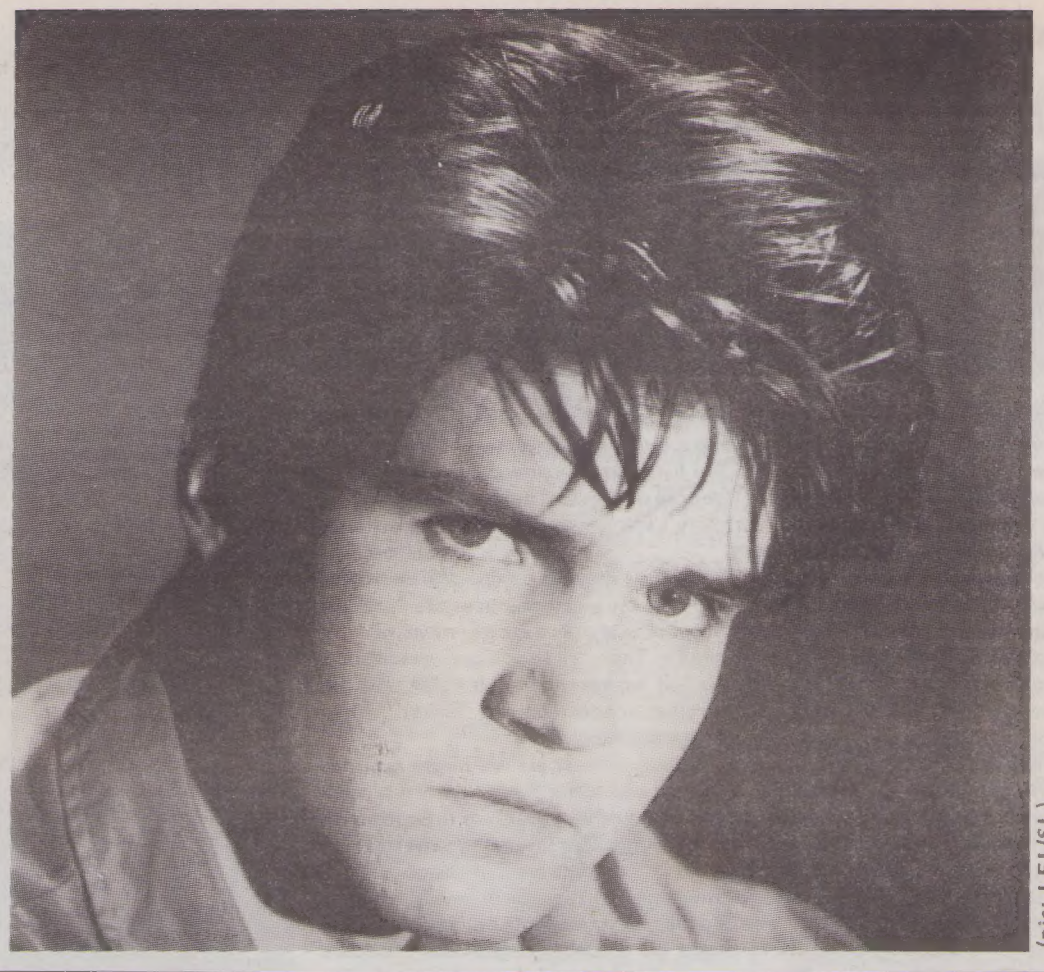
Perfect Skin turned from pop pleasure to an embarrassing, contrived ramble as the tempo slowed and Cole slurred. Gone was any trace of spontaneity or enjoyment. New songs from the recently released *Easy Pieces* suffered similar fates.

Cole's voice had much to do with the lousy presentation. On record his voice, while not great, is soothing and competent, but live, the limitations of his vocal cords become only too apparent. Some songs, like the great single *Brand New Friend* fall within his range, and his performance on such is definitely more confident.

The major problem though is Lloyd Cole himself. His live persona does nothing to endear him to the audience and gives nothing that breathes new life into old material. Dressed in black, turning his back on the audience and saying very little between songs, Cole appeared arrogant and aloof. Unlike someone like Lou Reed, Cole does not have the charisma nor the compatible material to adopt such a dour persona. Neither is it a clumsy shyness like Jonathan Richman's. It is somewhere in between, undefined and incompatible with the music, and distances him from his audience.

With unfavourable reviews of his new album filling the English press, Cole would do well to take himself less seriously and inject some passion into his live performances. Songs like *Speedboat* or *Forest Fire* confirm his talent, but it is up to Cole himself not to waste it.

JOHN BARKER



(pic: LFI/SL)

THE ALARM
Strength (CBS)

My first exposure to the Alarm was when fresh from the industrial wastelands of South Wales they opened a London show for Big Country. They played acoustic guitars with an excitement and aggression I'd never seen before, and there were comparisons to be drawn with the Clash in their Angry Young Men period.

The Clash comparison is still apt in this, the Alarm's second album — particularly in David Sharp's guitar style and the mixed-back vocal harmonies. The strident guitar-oriented style also owes something to U2 (the emotion-cracked vocal of *Dawn Chorus*), and even Springsteen (*Spirit Of '76*, with its E-Street piano courtesy of the Pretenders' Rupert Black).

Strength is a collection of songs dealing with the everyday struggles of life and the need for 'strength' of spirit and mind to overcome them: lost love (*Knife Edge, Strength, Dawn Chorus*), economic depression (*Deeside, Father To Son*) and the bleak future (*The Day The Ravens Left The Tower*). It's ironic that the album's main weakness is its lyrics — these are subjects that rock has already treated thoroughly, and new insights are thin on the ground in the music of the Alarm.

The cliches roll steadily until *Only The Thunder*, which, with its emphasis on personal politics rather than social commentary, shows evidence of a new maturity. The lyrics are presented subtly and in abstract, so that the listener can contribute as well.

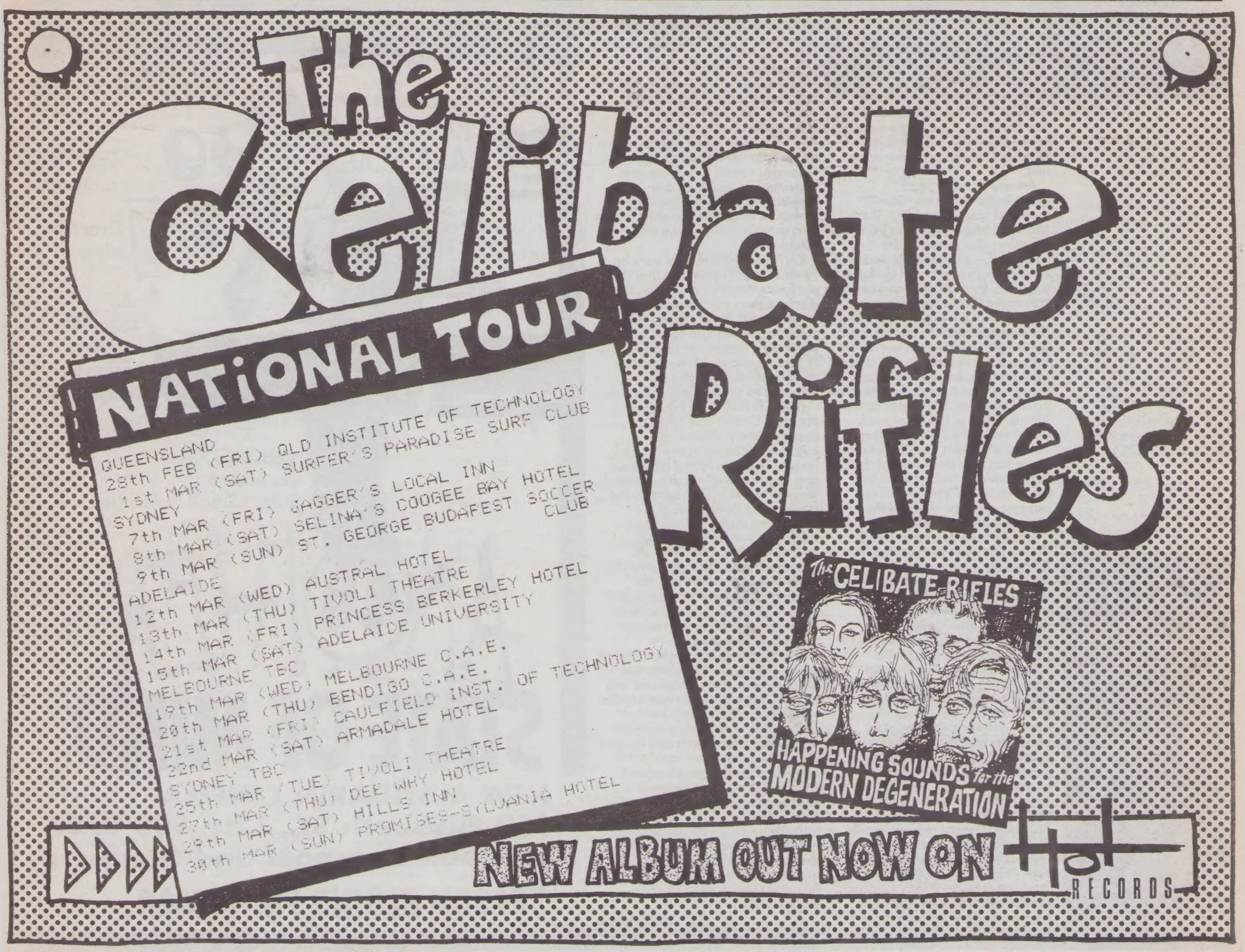
Another lyrical and musical highlight is *The Day The Ravens Left The Tower* — a moody, introspective look to the future. The peculiarly English imagery of strawberries-and-cream and Buckingham Palace introduces a thoughtful side to the band's range of emotions. The Beatlish ballad *Walk Forever By My Side*, with its simple arrangement of horns and piano, is another counterpoint to the Alarm's generally bleak and bitter output.

Producer Mike Howlett has succeeded in bringing out the anger in the music, without trying to be too clever. What you hear is a refined version of what you will see if they ever get round to touring.

It will indeed be interesting to see how the Alarm's social consicence develops, and, if they do become more successful, whether they forget their bitterness and anger at the lot of the man on the street.

So when you're feeling angered, frustrated, or embittered, don't take it out on the cat — grab a copy of *Strength* and whack it on the turntable.

GRANT CALTON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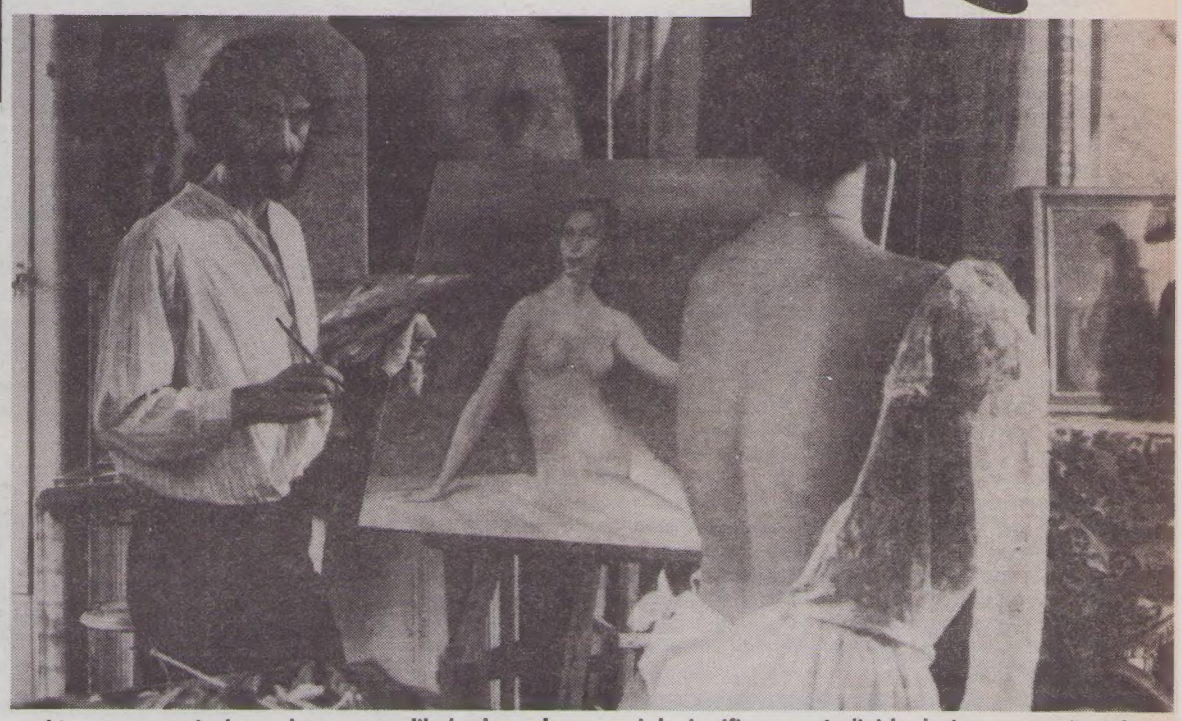
MOVIES & THEATRE

FAVOURITES OF THE MOON

Directed by Otar Iosseliani
Written by Otar Iosseliani and Gerard Brach
(Dendy Cinema, Sydney)



Quite often — whether sitting on the bus, standing at a corner waiting for the walk sign, during the interval of a movie or a concert — the interaction of unknown people is diverting. We listen in on conversations, observe unusual behaviour, wonder what people are up to. These little slices of life can be both fascinating — for curiosity's sake — and frustrating, because we never find out the whole story.

Favourites Of The Moon is similar in that there is no specific narrative structure, no beginning and end. However the bits and pieces are carefully juxtaposed and intertwined, and the characters are mostly more bizarre than we're likely to come across in reality. There's a shady gun merchant, a revolutionary, a detective, a whiz-kid bomb-maker, a thief, various wives, lovers, prostitutes, an anarchist schoolteaching father, chain-smoking children...

The lives of all the above are glimpsed, at first, as we might casually notice people on the street. Gradually we become privy to more of their activities, but are still so removed that we know nothing of their motives and have little understanding of their feelings. Our interest grows as these people become more absurd and their lives intersect through affairs, through business, through casual meetings at the hairdressers' and the local cafe. They do things with each other, or *to* each other, rarely talking, whilst in the background there might be a cacophony of disembodied voices or snatches of muffled conversations heard through a wall. The scene might cut to a practising string quartet, or be enveloped in a crescendo of music.

Why do all these things happen? Who knows?

Favourites Of The Moon is a pastiche of crazy Parisian life as seen through the eyes of an exiled Russian director. It might be about nothing in particular, but more likely has deep social significance. Individual interpretation plays a big part in appreciating this film. Presented with a varied selection of images, of scenes with little or no relation to those preceding and following, with almost more focal characters than it is possible to keep up with, we have to *think* about what's going on. As such, eavesdropping becomes an almost intellectual exercise...

RAY FARLEY

NAKED YOUNG MEN

Directed by Egil Kipste
(Belvoir St. Theatre, Sydney)

Naked Young Men is a banal attempt to elevate nightclub gaucherie into theatre. That it fails so miserably is largely because David Franklin (the singer), John Diner (the pianist, singer) and Egil Kipste (the director) have failed to come to terms with the genre itself.

What results is a tarted-up transplant, with Franklin in particular overbearing, strident, and like his voice, a harsh grate on the nuances of life. Mickey Mouse gestures mirror Mickey Mouse songs, while the predictable and the pedestrian intermingle so thoroughly that, by the third song, it was impossible to separate caricature from contrivance.

While Franklin is athletic and exuberant, so too are gymnasts, and his abundant sense of movement seems to owe more to *The Restless Years* (he played Bernie Harper) in its soap opera histrionics than an understanding of the inherent meaning of the body of songs he and Diner chose to work with.

Even purely as a singer, his interpretations of numbers like Iggy Pop's *Nightclubbing* or Lou Reed's *Vicious* were at best superficial, and at worst, ham-fisted. For his part, Diner attacked the piano energetically, pitched in with some useful harmonies, and when he managed to sneak in a few songs himself, revealed a voice with a good deal more control than his comrade in sweat.

What probably summed up *Naked Young Men* best for me was the large circular mirror Franklin repeatedly sang to. As a dramatic device it was a trite symbol of narcissism, but as a metaphor for image over content, director Egil Kipste chose remarkably well.

TERRY BYRNES

HALF LIFE

Directed by Dennis O'Rourke
(Opera House Cinema, Sydney)

On film, the Marshall Islands look like Paradise. Eden might have looked like this. But like Eden, the Marshall Islands are a Paradise lost.

A taste of the Tree of Knowledge's fruit sometimes comes at too high a price. The Marshall Islands, and the Marshall Islanders, are poisoned by radiation — deliberately poisoned, the evidence presented in *Half Life* suggests, by a US government and US armed forces conducting an experiment. An experiment? The US government was interested in the longterm effects of radiation fallout from nuclear explosions. Its scientists needed a stable, isolated community as a control group. The little-known mid-Pacific Marshall Islands were in 1947 assigned, under the United Nations Strategic Trust Agreement, to US protection, but in flagrant disregard of the UN imperative to "recognise... the interests of the inhabitants are paramount", the US used the Marshall Islanders as guinea pigs.

One of several ironies is that during this post-War period, the US and its allies were righteously (if selectively) hunting down World War II 'war criminals' — people who tortured, people who massacred, people like Josef Mengele and his colleagues, who performed sadistic 'genetic' experiments on other human beings. Are those who ordered and knowingly conducted the 1954 Bravo H-Bomb test, the grand genetic experiment to which the Marshall Islanders were subjected, 'criminals'? Did these Americans, as contemporary newsreel footage suggests, seek to justify Bravo on the grounds that the black "savages" of the Marshall Islands ("where hardly anybody lives") were sub-human? (Just as Mengele argued Jews are sub-human?) Or do these Americans believe their methods are redeemed by the fact that their findings may some day have widespread (God forbid) *practical* relevance?

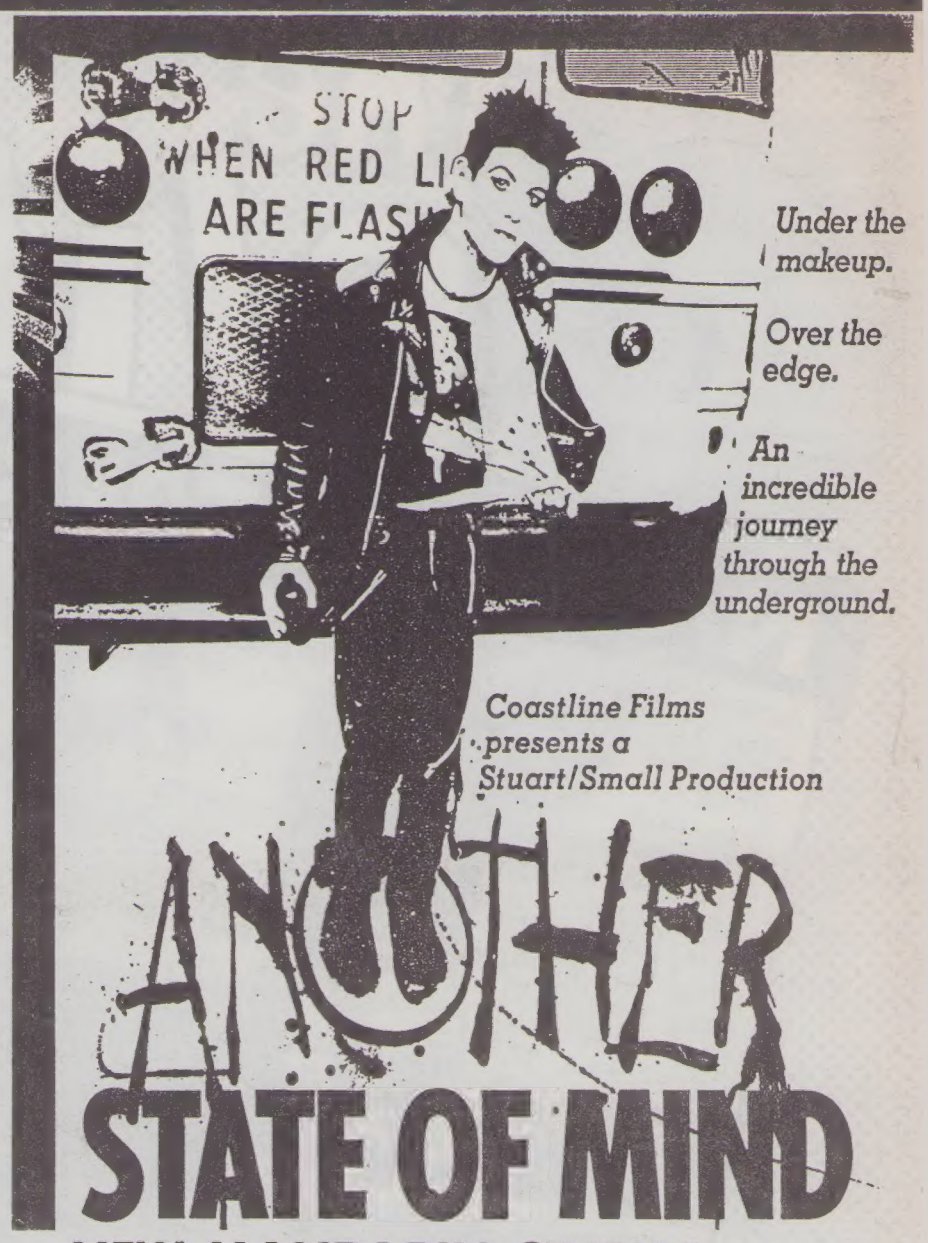
(I can't but wonder why Hiroshima and Nagasaki could not have been laboratory enough. After all, in the immediate post-War period General Macarthur and his troops 'ruled' Japan on the US government's behalf, and Macarthur even wrote the new Japanese constitution. Surely it would not have been too difficult to ensure longterm scientific access to a sample group of the affected populace?)

I'm finding this review very hard to write, and I recognise that it's a personal, emotive response. The documentary itself presents its case without overt emotional colouring. Where he can, Australian filmmaker Dennis O'Rourke allows contemporary material and those directly involved to speak for themselves.

Half Life is divided into two sections, *Causes* and *Effects*; appropriately, *Effects* far outweighs *Causes* in impact and length. The *Causes* material is so low-key that audiences — primed for action and high drama by the modern, TV-news style of presenting disasters, major tragedies — may feel oddly uncomfortable. Old filmreels shown in *Half Life* bring home the truth of that tired phrase, the "mundanity of evil". As a result of this seemingly mundane activity, women will give birth to beings that are genuinely not recognisable as human; to children whose human form is distorted; to children who, like all humans, will die — but prematurely and in pain.

"Don't the Americans know," one strong, unforgiving woman challenges, "that even *one* human life is valuable?" Her son died alone in a Washington hospital, stuck full of needles, treated (she charges) literally like a guinea pig. Hers is a harrowing voice. Let's hope its message can be heard: not just by Americans, not just by the Soviets, but heard and understood by all humanity — a humanity which must learn to value itself.

ELLY McDONALD



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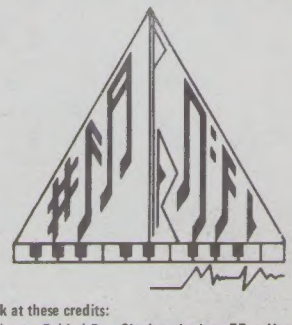

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Trust me. We'll let you know. Your cheque is in the mail. He's in a meeting. He's out to lunch. He's got two calls waiting. He's interstate. I'll call you on Monday. I'll get right back to you. You can depend on me. Don't worry, it's taken care of. That's what everyone's paying. It wasn't in the deal. Of course I remember you. Didn't you get my message? The mail must really be screwed up. We've been having some troubles with our phones. They always do it this way. They're on their way up. It's the best album they've ever made. I really love the band. This is the best you've ever had. We'll have lunch sometime. My agent will take care of it. I've never met a girl like you before. I'm not that kind of girl. She'll be backstage after the show. This coke hasn't been cut. There's none in town. Sounds good to me. You look great. I'm sure it will work. You should see them live. We'll definitely come and see you play. Don't worry, you'll be the headliner. The record company is totally behind this. I'm with the band. The band drinks free. Someone will be there early to let you in. Your tickets are at the door. The show starts at eight. We'll have it ready before tonight. I checked it myself. You won't find it cheaper anywhere else. The booking is definite. Of course you'll get a completed contract before the gig. It's an easy load in. There's plenty of power. Didn't you get the new contract rider? There will be lots of roadies when you get there. We'll have the flyers printed tomorrow. You won't have any trouble finding the place. I've played there before. We'll have plenty of time for a sound check. They never do a sound check. The club will be glad to let you use their PA and lights. He'll work the door for us tonight. You'll get your cut tonight — no problem. You won't have to play any covers or requests. It's on the truck. It's a union rule. The roadie took care of it. If it breaks, we'll fix it free. You'll have no problem fitting that speaker cabinet in the back of your car. Yes, the spotlight will be on you during your solos. I've only been playing for a year. I've been playing for 20 years. My last band had a record deal but we broke up before recording the album. I just use this little amp for small gigs — I've got a Marshall stack at home. Don't worry. It'll be perfectly safe if you leave it here. We have a great tour lined up for you next month. They said they don't have much equipment. There are t-shirts for everybody. These satin jackets run really small. Of course they'll do interviews. They sound much better with the new singer. But they're huge in Japan. We can turn down the volume if it's too loud. The stage mix sounds just like the program mix. Sure, it sounds fine at the back of the hall. I am singing on key — the PA's screwing up. It sounds in tune to me. We'll fix it in the mix. I know your mic is on. The hall sounds much better when it's full. You'll have a large, comfortable heated dressing room. This is one of Jimi's old Stratocasters. He swore he'd bring the limo back in an hour. I know we'll get some applause after the next tune. It's a last minute town. There's been a ton of shows in the market. The place was packed. We'll have you back. We'll make it up to you next time. If only the album had come out sooner. Nobody reads the reviews anyway. It had nothing to do with your marriage breaking up. It was on the rocks long before I met you.

Have I ever lied to you?

POWERHOUSE

RCA